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Fire and Sword

by Henryk Sienkiewicz

Translated by Samuel A. Binion

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HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ.

ALTEMUS' COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED EDITION

WITH FIRE AND SWORD

A TALE OF THE PAST

BY

HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ

TRANSLATED FROM THE POLISH
FIFTH AND REVISED EDITION
BY

DR. SAMUEL A. BINION

AUTHOR OF "ANCIENT EGYPT," ETC., AND TRANSLATOR OF "QUO VADIS," "PAN MICHAEL," ETC., ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
M. DE LIPMAN

PHILADELPHIA
HENRY ALTEMUS

KE 3970

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

IN UNIFORM STYLE.

Illustrated.

QUO VADIS; A TALE OF THE TIME OF NERO.

WITH FIRE AND SWORD; A TALE OF THE PAST.

PAN MICHAEL; A HISTORICAL TALE.

HENRY ALTEMUS, Publisher,
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INTRODUCTION.

Above the Marienkirche, in Cracow, rises two towers of unequal height, and crowned with strange cupolas like Oriental turbans.

Before the cathedral opens the old-world market place with its arches. If you stand in the market-place in the morning, or when the evening sunlight reddens the citadel of the Wawel, strange music suddenly breaks out overhead, sad, silvery; the clarion-call of a by-gone age. It re-echoes away up in the blue, coming from one sees not where, and flows in waves of ringing, pathetic melody over the old capital of the Poles. Then the music suddenly ceases, and there is a stillness, a stillness even more mysterious than the sudden outburst of sound.

That music is a voice from the past. When the hosts were gathered against fair Cracow a minstrel in the highest tower of the cathedral cheered the hearts of the besieged with the martial strains of his clarion, that resounded with warlike challenge over the city, while the battle raged around the walls. A bullet from the enemy cut short his signal and his life; and ever after, morning and evening, the same melody rings out over the city for a memorial, but now in piercing sadness, like a dirge, and stops suddenly at the point where the minstrel fell, breaking off in the middle of a bar.

The life of the Polish nation might well take that broken music as its symbol: it, too, ended in the middle of a bar, cut off from among the nations. High up in the citadel, on its rocky eminence above the town are the crowns and robes and scepters of the kings of Poland, and all the royal finery of jewels and gold. The trappings of kings, but no kings to wear them. For the kings of Poland lie there, in their cold shrines of stone, in the vaults of the fortress;

and every morning and evening they hear the clarion dirge of the nation suddenly broken off. And the rest is silence.

In his great epic of Poland, Sienkiewicz has shown us the nation at the summit of its power—a kingdom—a commonwealth as strong as any in Europe, which had beaten the Tartars and Swedes, and before which even the grand dukes of Moscow had more than once retreated vanquished. Poland stretched from the Black Sea to the Baltic, across all Europe, and from the Dnieper to the Oder. The Polish arms had a thousand splendid achievements on their roll of honor, and were yet destined for signal victories over the Turks, which should leave all Christendom their debtors.

But the novelist also shows the seeds of the nation's ruin, ready to grow rank and luxuriant, even at the noontide of glory.

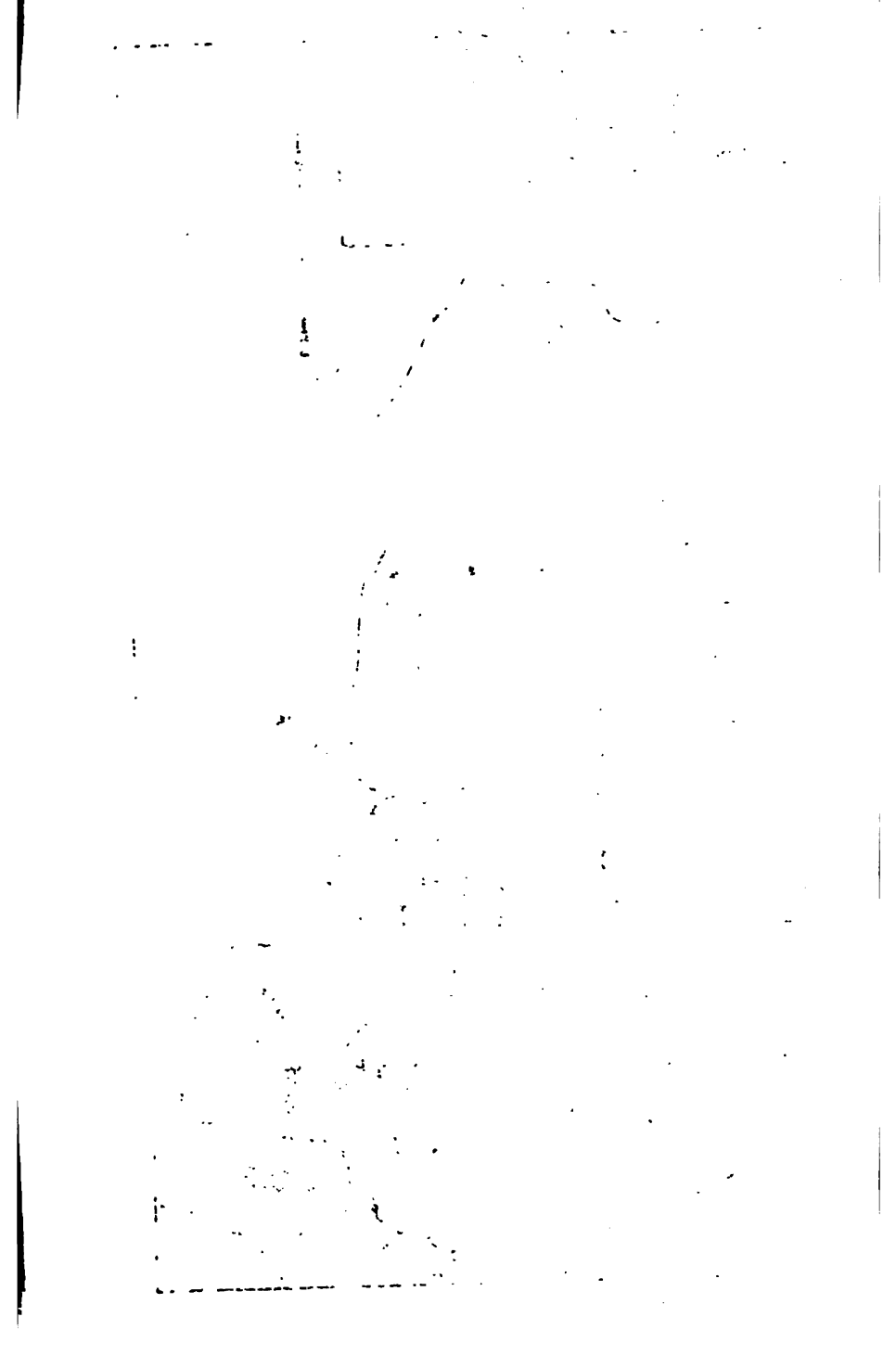
The Slavonic world was divided into three parts: the despotism of Moscow, beginning a new life under the young dynasty of the Romanoffs; the kingdom of Poland, really an association of powerful oligarchs, in which the mass of the people had no voice nor freedom; and the wild hordes of the Cossacks, where every man was his own lord among the great rivers that flow into the Black Sea.

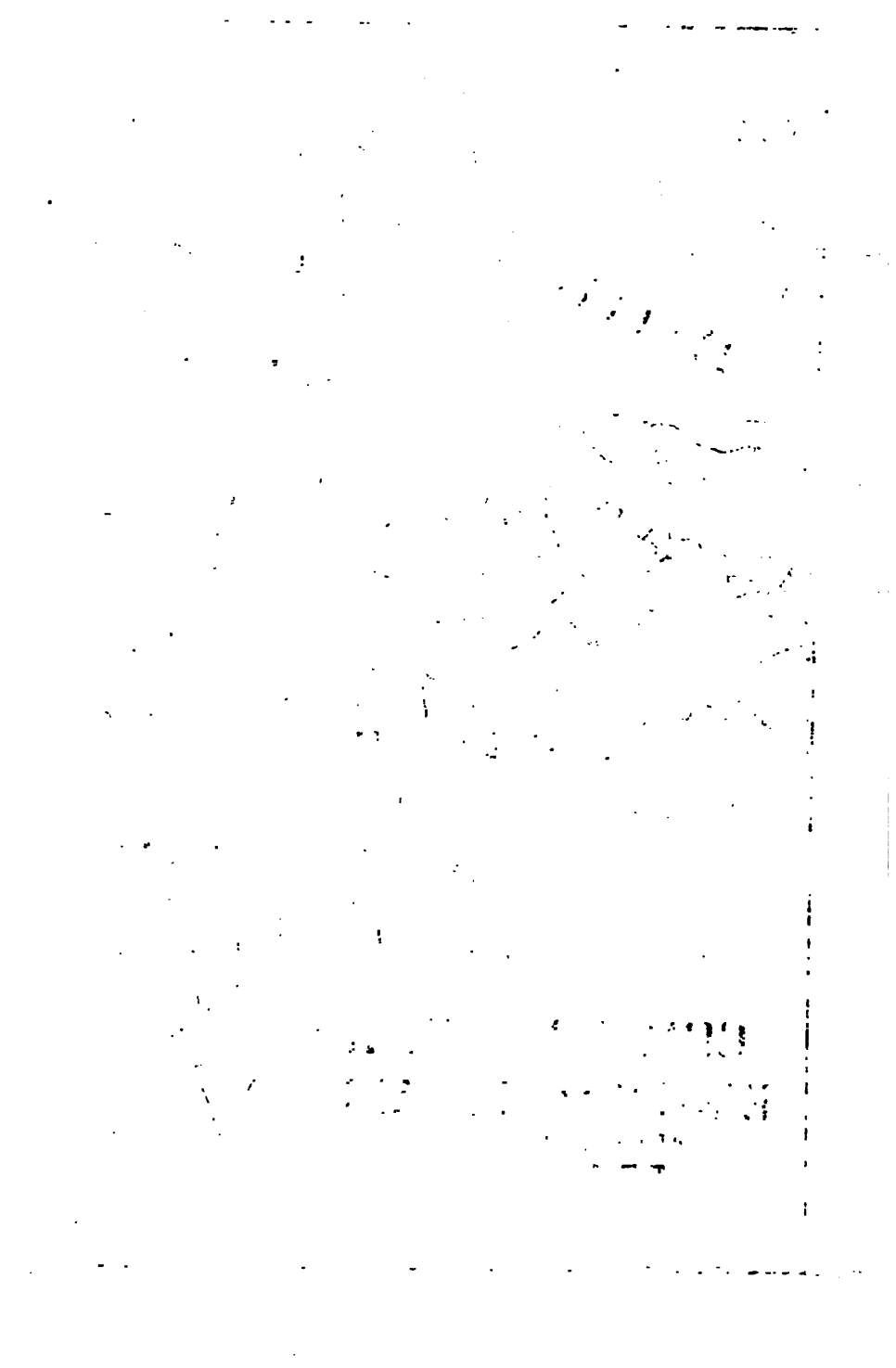
To-day the despotism stands alone. It has overshadowed the free hordes of the Cossacks; it has overshadowed the kings of Poland, and driven back the Tartars to the uttermost verge of the ocean. It has, indeed, overshadowed much more—a sixth part of the whole world.

Sienkiewicz has shown the elements of disintegration at work among the Cossack hordes. He has also shown clearly the causes that ruined Poland: the kinglets rising up around the elective king with almost royal might, and with ambition too great even for kings. Then round the magnates Pototskis, Kalinovskis, Vishnyovyetskis, were the lesser nobles, withstanding them in their turn, as the magnates withstood the king. Then, beneath all, the people, dumb serfs, down trodden, with no voice in their destinies, and not even the name of freedom. A kingdom divided against itself and fated to fall. The vaulting ambition of the nobles caused their ruin and the ruin of their country. Foes from without had been powerless in face of a united land.

CHARLES JOHNSTON.

BOOK I.





WITH FIRE AND SWORD.

CHAPTER I.

It was a remarkable year, the year 1647, in which various portents in the heavens and on the earth foretold calamities and unusual occurrences.

The chroniclers of those days mention the fact that in the spring, the locusts swarmed in unprecedented numbers from the Wild Lands, and destroyed crops and grass; and this of itself was a prediction of a Tartar incursion. In the summer a total eclipse of the sun occurred, and shortly afterward a comet appeared in the sky. In Warsaw, there was even a grave-mound in the clouds above the city; also a cross of fire. Thereupon was proclaimed a fast, with giving of alms, for some people affirmed that a plague was to fall upon the land, and destroy the human race. At length the winter came, so mild a winter that the eldest people had never witnessed one like it. In the southern districts the waters were not held by icy fetters, but, swelled by the melting snow every morning, they overflowed their basins and flooded the banks. There were copious rainfalls and the steppes became like a vast slough. In the south, the sun was so warm that, wonder of wonders, in the province of Bratslav and in the Wild Lands, a green fleece covered the steppes and expanse in mid-December. From the bee-hives, there came a buzzing and humming, and the cattle were lowing in their enclosures. As the order of nature appeared to be changed, every one in Russia, in the expectation of unwonted occurrences, turned their anxious minds and eyes towards the Wild Lands, from which direction the danger seemed most threatening.

Meantime nothing unusual occurred on the steppes, and no battles nor encounters took place, save those that are always occurring there; of which eagles, hawks, crows, and wild beasts are the only witnesses.

For such was the nature of these lands. The last vestiges of civilized life disappeared as one went towards the south. Not far from Chigrin in the direction of the Dnieper, and from Uman in the direction of the Dniester, and then a great distance as far as the coast lakes and the sea—steppe followed steppe between the two rivers, as if framed by them. At the bend of the Dnieper, in the Nij[1] beyond the rapids, Cossack life swarmed, but upon the steppes themselves, no one lived, and only on their borders, were here and there patches which looked like islands in the midst of the sea. The country belonged in name to the Commonwealth, but it was a waste, and the Commonwealth permitted the Tartars to use it as a pasture-land. As the Cossacks, however, frequently defended it, the pasture ground was often turned into a battle-field.

How many battles were fought here, how many men were killed, has never been recorded. Eagles, hawks, and crows, alone witnessed these scenes, and whoever heard after the cawing and flapping of wings, and saw the dense flocks of birds, as they circled about one particular spot, knew that corpses and bones lay there unburied. In the long grass man hunted man, like wolves or antelopes. All might hunt who wished. The outlaw sought refuge in the wild steppes, the shepherd completely armed, guarded his flocks, the knight-errant sought adventures, robbers sought plunder, the Cossack sought the Tartar, and the Tartar sought the Cossack. It happened sometimes that whole bands defended their flocks against an army of assailants. The steppe was at the same time both desert and peopled, quiet and threatening, peaceful, yet full of danger, wild with the wilderness of desert lands, and also savages.

Occasionally a great war took place. Then the Tartar chambuls,[2] the Cossack regiments, and the Polish of Wallachian banners would sweep over the plains like the waves of the sea. At night, the howling of wolves responded to the neighing of horses. The beating of kettle-drums and the blasts of trumpets resounded as far as the Lake of Ovid, and on to the sea; and along the dark Kutschman border a crowd surged like a great river. The frontiers of the Commonwealth from Kamenets to the Dnieper were guarded by

[1] The name for Cossack lowlands.

[2] Chambul—a division of Tartar horseman.

military posts and watch towers, and one could easily know when the road had begun to swarm with people by the countless flocks of birds which, terrified at the Chambuls, flew towards the North. But when the Tartar came from the Black Forest, and forded the Dnieper from Wallachia, the birds followed him across the steppes into the southern province.

But this particular winter, the birds did not migrate noisily to the Commonwealth, as was their wont. It was quieter than usual on the steppes. At the moment when our story opens, the sun was just setting, and its red glow illumined the whole desert region. On the northern border of the steppes along the River Omelnik, to its mouth, the sharpest eye could not have detected a living being, nor the slightest motion in the dark, dry, withered grass of the plains. The sun's bright disk was half below the horizon; the sky by degrees became darker and darker, and gloom gradually settled upon the steppes. On the left bank of the river, upon a tiny elevation, that looked more like a grave-mound than a hill, were the ruins of a fortified military post that had been built by Teodoryk Buchatski, and afterwards destroyed by invaders. The ruins cast a long shadow. Not far from them gleamed the waters of the River Omelnik, that from its far distant source wound along to empty its waters into the Dnieper. But the last gleam of light was gradually dying out from the earth and sky. From above, the cry of the cranes alone was to be heard as they winged their way to the sea; no other sound broke the stillness.

Night shrouded the desert, and with its shadows came the hour when spectral visitors haunt the earth. At such times, the knights on guard at the post related stories to one another of how at night in the Wild Lands the shades of those who had been killed, and who had been snatched away in the midst of their sins, would rise from their death sleep and dance in circles without hindrance from cross or church. And when at the hour of midnight the candles began to burn down, prayers were offered up for the dead. It was said also that the ghosts of men on horseback scampered across the waste to overtake wayfarers, wailing and pleading with them for a sign of the Holy Cross; and that among these were also vampires who hunted people with howlings. The practiced ear could distinguish from afar the howling of the vampire from that of a wolf. Sometimes whole legions of ghosts appeared and came so near to the post that the sentries gave

the alarm. This was the portent of a great war. The appearance of single ghosts boded no good, but could not always be taken as an ill omen, for frequently a living person would appear before the traveller and disappear like a shadow, consequently it was easy to mistake him for a ghost.

Night fell quickly over the region of the Omelnik, and it was not surprising that a ghost or a man should appear in the vicinity of the little military post. The moon, rising from the other side of the Dnieper, whitened the desert, the thistles, and the far steppes with its light. At a distance on the steppes, other nocturnal beings appeared. Little clouds darkened the moon from time to time, and forms gleamed out occasionally in the darkness and then were veiled by the shadows. At times they disappeared entirely and seemed to vanish in the darkness. Slowly pushing onwards towards the elevation on which the first sentry was stationed, they crept quietly, carefully, and slowly, halting every now and then.

There was something in their movements that inspired awe, as indeed did the whole steppe, which was apparently so peaceful. From time to time a wind blew from the Dnieper with a wailing sound as it rustled the withered thistles which swayed back and forth and trembled as if in fear. At last the figures disappeared in the shadow of the ruins. In the pale light of the night only a horseman was seen keeping guard on the little hill.

At last the rustling of the wind amid the thistles roused his attention. Moving towards the edge of the mound, he peered attentively across the steppe. At this moment the wind became still, the rustling ceased, and there was perfect silence.

Suddenly a shrill whistle was heard. Discordant voices began to shout in confusion: "Allah! Allah! Jesus Christ! Help! Murder!" The report of fire-arms was heard; red flashes leaped in the darkness; the tramp of horses' hoofs was mingled with the clash of steel. Fresh horsemen appeared as if they had sprung up from the ground of the steppe. It seemed as if a storm had suddenly swept over the still and evil-boding wilderness. Then the groans of men were heard amid the terrible uproar; at length all was quiet; the fight was over.

A scene had just been enacted that was a matter of common occurrence in the Wild Lands.

The horsemen gathered on the height; one of them dismounted, and looked closely at some object on the ground.

Then was heard through the darkness a powerful voice of command:

"Hallo, there! Strike a light!"

Presently sparks flew, and a flame sprang up from the dry reeds and chips which travelers across the Wild Lands always carry with them. Then a man stuck his pole with the fire-pot in the earth, and the bright light made clear the group of men beneath, who were bending over a form that lay motionless on the ground.

The men were soldiers, dressed in the red, court-uniform, with wolf-skin shakos on their heads. One of them, mounted on a powerful horse, appeared to be the leader. Dismounting and approaching the prostrate figure, he asked:

"What do you think Sergeant, does he live or not?"

"He lives, Commander,[1] but the death-rattle is in his throat; a noose strangled him."

"What is he?"

"Not a Tartar, but a man of rank."

"God be praised!"

Saying this, the commander looked more closely at the dying man.

"He looks like a hetman," he said.

"The horse he was riding is of the best Tartar breed; there's not a finer one in the Khan's stables," replied the sergeant. "Look! There they are holding it."

The commander looked up and his face brightened. Close by where he stood, two privates held a remarkably fine horse, which with ears pricked up and nostrils distended, stretched his neck forward and gazed at his master with terrified eyes.

"But the horse, Commander, will be ours?" asked the sergeant.

"Why, you dog-worshipper, would you take a Christian's horse from him on the steppes?"

"But this is booty——"

Further conversation was here interrupted by a loud rattle from the throat of the strangling man.

"Pour gorzalka down his throat!" said the Commander. "Unbuckle his belt!"

"Do we camp here to-night?"

"Yes. Unsaddle the horses, and light the camp fire."

The soldiers set briskly to work. Some of them began to rub the prostrate man to bring him back to life; others gath-

[1] Namiestnik.

ered reeds for the fire; others spread camel and bear skins on the ground to serve as couches.

The Commander troubled himself no further about the strangling man, but loosened his belt and stretched himself out upon a cloak near the fire. He was a young man, slender, sunburnt, very handsome, with delicate features, and a large aquiline nose. His eyes had a somewhat overbearing and defiant expression, but his face gave the impression of honesty. A rather heavy moustache, and a beard whose luxuriant growth proved that it had long been neglected, added importance to his years.

In the meantime two servants were busy preparing supper. They laid an already-prepared quarter of mutton on the fire, then they took from the horses several bustards that had been shot during the day, some partridges, and an antelope. A servant took charge of the last and began to skin it. The wood fire blazed up and threw a great circle of light across the plain. The choked man began slowly to come back to life.

After a time he opened his bloodshot eyes and gazed about among the group of strangers, examining their features; then he attempted to rise. The soldier who had previously conversed with the Commander placed his hands under the man's arms and lifted him up; another put in his hand a halbert upon which the stranger supported himself with all his strength. At last, painfully and with a choking voice, he managed to utter his first word.

"Water!"

They gave him gorzalka, and he drank it greedily; it evidently did him good; for when they took the flask away from him, he asked in a perfectly clear voice:

"In whose hands am I?"

The Commander got up and approached him.

"In the hands of those who rescued you."

"So you caught me with a lasso?"

"What do you mean? We wield the sword, not the lasso. You wrong good soldiers with your suspicion. You were entrapped by some scoundrels who pretended to be Tartars, and if you wish to see them, there they lie, slaughtered like sheep."

Then the Commander pointed towards the dark mass of bodies that lay at the foot of the hill.

Then the unknown said:

"Now permit me to rest."

They placed a saddle-blanket of soft felt under him, and he lay upon it still and quiet.

He was a man in the prime of life, of medium stature, broad-shouldered, of almost gigantic frame, and expressive features. His head was massive, his complexion was swarthy and very sunburnt, his eyes were black and slightly oblique like those of a Tartar, and his twisted moustache broadened at the ends into thick tufts. His strong face betokened pride and daring; it was both attractive and repulsive, possessing the dignity of a Hetman with Tartar cunning, kindness, and ferocity combined.

After he had rested for a time on the saddle-blanket, he rose, and to the great surprise of all, instead of expressing his thanks, he walked over and looked at the corpses.

"The coarse brute," growled the Commander.

The stranger looked closely into each face, and nodded his head, as a man might who had guessed all; then he turned slowly back towards the commander, feeling his sides as if looking for his belt into which he evidently wished to thrust his hands.

This air of importance in a man who had but lately been saved from the halter, displeased the young Commander, who remarked, not without bitterness:

"One would ask whether you were looking for friends among those rascals, or whether, perhaps, you wish to say a prayer for their souls."

"They are unknown to me," he answered, with dignity.

"You are both right and wrong. You are right in thinking I was looking for friends, and you are wrong in thinking them rascals, for they are the servants of a certain nobleman, who is my neighbor."

"So you and your neighbor evidently do not drink at the same spring."

A peculiar smile flitted across the thin lips of the stranger.

"You are mistaken again," he muttered through his teeth. Then shortly he spoke out:

"But pardon me, sir, for not having sooner expressed my thanks for the assistance and kind care that has saved me from a sudden death. Your valor has offset my carelessness, for I had become separated from my people; but my gratitude is in proportion to your readiness in coming to my assistance."

Then he extended his hand. But the haughty young Com-

mander did not rise or respond. He said: "I should first like to know if I am talking to a nobleman, for even if I did doubt the fact, it does not become me to accept thanks from one whose name I do not know."

"I see that you have the true knightly sense of honor, and you are right. I should have prefaced my discourse and my thanks with my name. I am Zenobious Abdank, and quarter the arms of Abdank with a cross. I am a nobleman of the province of Kiev; a landed proprietor, and a colonel of the Cossack regiment of Prince Dominik Zaslavski."

"And I am Yan Skshetuski, lieutenant of the cuirassiers of his Excellency Prince Yeremy Vishnyovyetski."

"You serve under a celebrated warrior. Accept my thanks, and hand."

The Commander hesitated no longer. The heavy cavalry was accustomed, it is true, to look down on the rest of the army, but Skshetuski was on the steppes in the Wild Lands where less attention was paid to the difference in rank. Besides, he was dealing with a colonel, of which fact he was soon convinced by the evidence of his own eyes; for, when his men brought back Pan Abdank's belt and sabre, which they had taken from him while they were endeavoring to restore him to consciousness, they handed him at the same time a short truncheon with a hilt of bone and a head made of horn, such as Cossack colonels always carry. Beside this, Colonel Abdank's clothing was of fine material, and his conversation gave evidence of a keen intelligence and a knowledge of the world.

Commander Skshetuski now invited Abdank to join the company.

The odor of the roast meat was wafted across from the wood fire and tickled the palates and the nostrils of the hungry men. An attendant took the roast from the fire, and putting it in an earthen dish served them. They began to eat, and when a huge sack made of goat-skin and filled with Moldavian wine was added to the feast, the conversation waxed lively.

"Here's to our safe return home," said Skshetuski.

"So you are on your way home. From whence, if I may ask?" said Abdank.

"A long way from here; from the Crimea."

"And what were you doing there? Were you a hostage?"

"No, indeed, Colonel, I was with the Khan himself."

Abdank's curiosity was aroused.

"Oh, indeed, you were in fine company? On what mission did you go to see the Khan?"

"I went with a letter from his Excellency Prince Yeremy."

"He sent you then!"

"What did his Excellency, the Prince, write about to the Khan?"

The Commander looked his companion sharply in the face.

"Colonel," he said, "you looked closely into the faces of the knaves who caught you with a lasso; that was your affair; but what the Prince wrote to the Khan is neither your business nor mine, but their own."

"At first," answered Abdank craftily, "I wondered that the Prince should chose so young a man as an ambassador to the Khan, but I am no longer astonished, for I see that although young in years, you are old in experience and judgment."

The Commander swallowed the flattering words and curling the ends of his moustache said: "And now tell me what you are doing on the Omelnik, and how you happened to be here alone?"

"I am not alone; I left my men behind. I am on my way to Kudak, to see Pan Grodzitski, who is in command there, and to whom Hetman W. gave me letters."

"And why do you not go by water?"

"Because I am obeying orders which I do not see fit to disobey?"

"It is strange that the Hetman should have given such an order, and that you should have fallen into such straits? Had you gone by water such a thing could not have happened."

"My good sir, the steppes are quiet just now; I have known them heretofore, and what has happened to me is the result of the wickedness and envy of men."

"And whom do you suspect."

"It is a long story. An evil neighbor, Commander, has ruined my property, has driven me from my land, has killed my son, and as you have seen, has attempted my life."

"And you carry no sabre at your side?"

Over Abdank's powerful face there passed a look of hatred; his eyes glared, and he said slowly and emphatically:

"Surely I carry one, and with God's help I will seek no other assistance against my enemies."

The Commander was about to speak, but suddenly a sound

of horses' hoofs was heard on the plain, or rather, the hurried pattering of hoofs upon the slippery earth. Then there appeared one of the Commander's men who was keeping watch, with word that a company of horse was approaching.

"These must be my men," said Abdank, "whom I left behind beyond Tasmina; not suspecting treachery, I had promised to wait them here."

In a little while a company of horsemen drew up in a semi-circle around the hill. By the light of the fire, the horses' heads could be distinguished, with dilated nostrils, snorting from fatigue; and above them the riders, who bending over, screened their faces with their hands from the fire, and peered eagerly towards the light.

"Hallo men, who are you," shouted Abdank.

"Servants of God," replied voices from the darkness.

"Yes, these are my Cossacks," exclaimed Abdank turning to the Commander. "Come here! Come here!"

Some of the men sprang from their horses and approached the fire.

"We have made haste, indeed we have, little father. What happened to you?"

"I was detained. Khvedka, the traitor, was informed of my coming and waited here with others. He must have ridden at break-neck speed. They tried to strangle me with a noose."

"Merciful God! And who is that Pole at your side?"

Then they looked threateningly at Skshetuski, and his companions.

"These are good friends," said Abdank. "God be thanked, I am safe and well. We must proceed on our way at once."

"God be praised! We are ready!"

The late arrivals began to warm their hands over the fire, for the night though fine was cold. There were about forty robust and well armed men. They did not look like Cossack regulars, which surprised Skshetuski, especially as there was such a large company of them. All this looked very suspicious to the Comander. If Hetman W. had really sent Abdank to Kudak, he would have given him a company of regulars; and again, why should he have ordered him to make the journey from Chigrin across the steppes instead of by water? The fact that he would have to ford all the rivers that flow through the plains to empty into the Dnieper, would only delay him, and it looked rather as if Abdank were trying to avoid going to Kudak.

Moreover the young Commander was astonished at Abdank's personality. He remarked at once that the Cossacks, who were usually on familiar terms with their Colonels, treated him with unusual respect, as if he were a real hetman. He must therefore, be a knight of great importance, which appeared all the more strange to Skshetuski, as he knew the Ukraine on both sides of the Dnieper, and had never heard of an Abdank who was especially celebrated. He noticed also something peculiar in the features of this man, a hidden power which showed in his face at times, like the gleam from the flame of a fire, a will of iron, which seemed to indicate that this man would yield to no other man, nor to any circumstance. Prince Yeremy had just such will-power expressed in his features. But what was inborn in the Prince by virtue of his high lineage and his position, might well cause remark when found in a man of no known name, who had lost his way in the desert steppes. Skshetuski pondered long and deeply. At first it occurred to him that Abdank might be a powerful outlaw who had sought to escape the law by fleeing to the steppes; then again he thought that he might be the captain of a band of robbers, but this did not seem probable. The apparel and speech of the man indicated some other position in life. The Commander did not know what to make of it; he kept on guard while Abdank ordered his horse to be led forward.

"Commander," the latter said, "time is everything for a man on the road. Allow me to thank you once more for having rescued me. May God grant that I can repay you some day with equal service."

"I did not know whom I was rescuing, therefore I deserve no thanks."

"Thus speaks your modesty, which is equalled only by your courage. Accept this ring."

The Commander frowned, took a step backward, and scanned Abdank closely. The latter, however, continued with an almost paternal earnestness in his voice and bearing:

"See here, I am not giving you the ring for its intrinsic value, but for its other virtues. While still a youth I was held captive by the Mussulmans, and I received this ring from a pilgrim who was just returning from the Holy Land. In this little eye is contained dust from the Holy Sepulchre. Such a gift should not be spurned though it came from the hand of an outlaw. You are a young man and a soldier, and

if the gray beard who is tottering to the grave does not even know what awaits him before his last hour, how much less the youth, who has a long life before him and who must meet with many an adventure. This ring will guard and protect you from calamity when the Day of Judgment comes, and I say to you that this day is already beginning to dawn across the Wild Lands."

He paused. There was silence for a moment save for the crackling of the flames and the snorting of the horses.

From out the distant rushes, came the mournful howls of the wolves. Suddenly, Abdank repeated, as if speaking to himself:

"The Day of Judgment is already dawning across the Wild Lands, and when it comes the world will wonder."

The Commander took the ring mechanically, so astonished was he at the words of this remarkable man. Abdank, however stared fixedly into the darkness of the steppe. Then he turned slowly and mounted his horse. His followers were already at the foot of the hill.

"To the road! To the road! Farewell, dear soldier," said he to the Commander. The times are such that one brother dares not trust another, and that is the reason why you have not discovered the identity of the man you rescued, for I did not tell you my name."

"Then you are not Abdank?"

"That is my coat of arms. . . ."

"And your name?"

"Bogdan Zenovi Khmyelnitski."

Then he rode down the hill and his men followed him. Speedily they were hidden from view by the night and the mist; but when they had ridden some distance, the wind bore back the words of a Cossack song:

"Oh set us free Lord, us wretched slaves,
From hard bondage,
From out the Moslem's bondage dread,
Into the bright morning.
By still waters
Into the joyful Land!
Into the Christian's world.
Hear our prayers, O Lord,
The prayers of the unhappy;
We poor slaves."

The voices gradually died away and at last were lost in the wind that whistled among the reeds.

CHAPTER II.

The next morning quite early Skshetuski reached Chigrin, and put up in the house of Prince Yeremy, where he expected to stay for some time in order to rest his men and horses after the long journey from the Crimea. They had been forced to make this journey by land, owing to the rise of the Dnieper, and to its unusually strong current, for no boat could make headway against the stream this winter. Skshetuski himself was glad to rest awhile, and then he went to see the former Commissary of the Commonwealth, Pan Zatsvilikhovski, a brave soldier, who although not in the service of the Prince, was his trusty friend. The Commander desired to ask him if he had any communications from Lubni. The Prince had sent no special instructions, but had only sent word that Skshetuski, if the Khan's answer were favorable, should proceed slowly on his journey, so as to spare the horses and men. The Prince's business with the Khan was as follows: It concerned the punishment of some Tartar Murzas who had invaded his territory beyond the Dnieper, and whom he had already severely punished. The Khan had given a favorable reply to the prince's letter. He had promised to send a sepecial embassy in April to punish the disobedient, and in order to keep on good terms with such a renowned warrior, he had sent the prince, by Skshetuski, a thoroughbred horse and a sable cap. Skshetuski who had fulfilled his mission well, a mission that in itself was a proof of the high esteem in which he was held by the prince, was delighted to be allowed to stop in Chigrin, instead of having to hurry homeward; but the old Zatsvilikhovski was very much worried over certain things that had been taking place in Chigrin for some time past. They went together, therefore, to Dopula, a Wallachian, who kept a wine-shop in the town. Here they found, although it was quite early, a crowd of nobles. It was a market-day, and on this particular day, a drove of cattle had been driven into Chigrin which were on their way to the camp of the royal army; and this had

brought a crowd of people to the place. The nobles were wont to gather in the market-place in the so-called Bell-corner, near Dopula's. Here were assembled tenants of Konyetspolski, officials of Chigrin, proprietors of neighboring estates, those that rented and those that owned them, independent nobles, land-stewards, a few Cossack elders, and many more of lower rank, some living on their own property, and some on that of others.

These various groups all sat upon benches ranged about oaken tables conversing in loud tones. The subject that seemed to interest them all was the flight of Bogdan Zenovi Khmyelnitski. This was the most important event that had happened in town. Skshetuski took his place in a corner with Zatsvilikhovski, and began to inquire of him what kind of phoenix this Bogdan Zenovi Khmyelnitski was, of whom everyone was speaking.

"Don't you know?" answered the old soldier. "He is the Secretary of the Zaporojian army, the heir of Subota," and he added softly; "My friend—we have long known each other. We were companions-in-arms in many a battle, in which he distinguished himself, especially under Tsetsora. Such an accomplished soldier of wide military experience is not to be found in the whole Commonwealth. One dare not speak it aloud, but he has the head of a Hetman; a man of gigantic intellect and great understanding. The Cossacks obey him better than they do their own Koshovs and Atamans; a man not without his good qualities, but proud, restless, and when he hates—he can be terrible."

"What has happened to force him to flee from Chigrin?"

"Disputes with the starosta Chaplinski; but these were trifles. It is nothing unusual for one noble to break up another's domestic arrangements merely out of spite; he is not the only one who has done it, and the starosta is not the only one who has suffered. They say that he seduced a wife of the starosta. The starosta had carried off his sweetheart and married her, and in revenge Bogdan Zenovi Khmyelnitski, they say, seduced her, and this is probably true, for, as a rule, women are giddy; but these are only pretenses behind which more serious matters lie hidden. See, this is how it was. In Cherkass there lived an old Cossack Colonel, Barabash, a friend of mine. He had a privilege and writings from the King, which, it was rumored, incited the Cossacks to rebel against the nobility. But as he is a benevolent, good

man, he kept them to himself, and said nothing about them. Khmyelnitski invited Barabash to dinner at his house here in Chigrin, and during his absence, he sent some of his people to Barabash's country seat, who took his letters and documents from his wife, and went off with them. May God forbid that they should stir up another such rebellion as that of Ostranitsa; for I repeat, he is a terrible man, and has disappeared and is hiding, God only knows where."

Then Skshetuski answered.

"He is a fox; he has led me on slippery ground. He told me that he was a Cossack Colonel under Prince Zaslavski. I found him last night in the steppes, and rescued him from the halter."

Zatsvilikhovski put both hands to his head.

"In God's name what do you say? That cannot be!"

"It is not only possible, it is a fact. He told me that he was a Colonel under Prince Zaslavski, and that he was sent on a mission by the great Hetman to Pan Grodzitski at Kudak. But I did not believe him as he did not travel by water, but sneaked through the steppes. Oh, he is crafty."

"Like Ulysses? Where did you meet him?"

"Beside the Omelnik, on the right bank of the Dnieper. He was apparently riding towards Sich. He wanted to avoid Kudak. Now I understand."

"Were there many with him?"

"About forty, but they came too late. If my men had not been on the spot, the starosta's people would have strangled him."

"Stop, this is a serious matter. The servants of the starosta did you say?"

"So he informed me."

"How could the starosta know where to find him when all the people in the town are racking their brains to discover where he is hiding."

"I am sure I don't know, perhaps Khmyelnitski was lying, and pretended that the common robbers were servants of the starosta in order to make out a better case."

"Impossible, but it is a curious affair. You know that we have letters from the Hetman commanding us to arrest Khmyelnitski and to detain him in prison."

Ere the commander could reply a noble stalked into the room with a great clatter. He banged the door several times, looked boldly into the room, and called out: "My regards, gentlemen."

He was a man of forty years, of short stature, with an overbearing look, and eyes that stood out like plums in his head and were never still; apparently a very excitable, nervous, easily-provoked man.

"Regards, gentlemen," he repeated, more loudly and with greater emphasis, as no one answered him.

"Regards! Regards!" was echoed by several voices.

It was Pan Chaplinski, vice-starosta of Chigrin, the trusted servant of the young standard-bearer Konyetspolski. He was not popular in Chigrin, for he was a brawler and a bully, and revengeful, but he had considerable influence, so it was politic to be on good terms with him.

Zatsvilikhovski was the only one whom he respected and esteemed, as indeed did every one, because of his dignity, virtue, and valor. As soon as he spied him Chaplinski walked across the room to where he sat, and bowing somewhat stiffly to Skshetuski, he sat down beside him with his glass and mead.

"Starosta," said Zatsvilikhovski: "Do you know what has become of Khmyelnitski?"

"He has been hanged, as sure as my name is Chaplinski! And if he is not hanged yet, he certainly will be. Now that he has the Hetman's letters, I only wish that I could get my hands upon him."

With these words he brought his clenched fist down upon the table with such force that the glasses splashed over.

"Don't forget the wine, good sir," said Skshetuski.

Zatsvilikhovski interrupted him. "How can you hope to catch him? He has fled, and not a soul knows where he is hiding!"

"No one knows? I know as sure as my name is Chaplinski. You know Khvedka. Well Khvedka is in his service, but he is in mine also. He will turn Judas to Khmyelntiski, there is much to tell. Khvedka has become intimate with Khmyelnitski's men. He is a shrewd fellow. He knows every move and has undertaken to bring me Khmyelnitski dead or alive, and he has gone across the steppes ahead of him, and knows where he expects to stop, and will await him there. Yes, he is a damned rascal." Here he banged the table again.

"Don't spill the wine," repeated Skshetuski emphatically. He felt a strong antipathy for this vice-starosta from the first moment that he saw him.

The noble colored, blinked his bulging eyes, and looked insultingly at Skshetuski. As he remarked, however, that he wore the colors of Vishnyovyetski he restrained himself; for although Konyetspolski was at the time at enmity with the Prince Vishnyovyetski, Chigrin was too near Lubni for it to be safe to insult the Prince's colors. Then the Prince had so picked his men that one would think twice before entering into a quarrel with one of them.

"So Khvedka has undertaken to bring Khmyelnitski to you?" queried Zatsvilikhovski.

"Yes, and he will bring him, as sure as I am Chaplinski."

"And I say that he will not bring him—Khmyelnitski has eluded his would-be captors, and is on his way to Sich, and the Governor of Cracow must be notified of the fact to-day. Khmyelnitski is not to be played with. In short, he has more brain, a stouter arm, and better luck than you, who are far too hasty. Khmyelnitski has continued his journey uninjured, I repeat, and if you do not believe me, I will produce the man who saw him only yesterday—on the steppes, and who bid him Good-bye."

"That is impossible, impossible," cried Chaplinski, clutching at his hair with one hand.

"Moreover," continued Zatsvilikhovski, "this cavalier with us rescued him himself, and cut down your servants, for which, however, he is not guilty, in spite of letters from the Hetman; for he was on his way back from the Crimea on a special mission, and knew nothing of the letters. Coming upon a man upon the steppes who had been set upon by villains he went to his assistance. I am telling you about Khmyelnitski's escape in good time, for he might hunt you up at your country-place and that might not be an unmixed pleasure for you."

Upon this he began to quarrel with him and sputtered "Phew! to the devil with you!"

Zatsvilikhovski did not love Chaplinski.

Chaplinski sprang from his seat speechless with rage; his face was purple, and his eyes seemed to be starting from his head. He stood thus before Skshetuski, and uttered disjointed sentences.

"How—what—you? In spite of the Hetman's letter! I will—I will—."

Skshetuski did not stir, he merely leaned his elbow on the table, and stared at the stammering Chaplinski as a hawk might look at a sparow in a net.

"Why do you hang on to me like a can on a dog's tail?" he inquired.

"I will take you to court—you, in spite of the letters—the Cossacks will—"

He shouted so loudly that every one in the room stopped talking to listen. The people present turned their attention to Chaplinski. He was always seeking a quarrel, that was his nature. He made trouble with every one he met, but that he should quarrel with Zatsvilikhovski, the only man whom he respected, and with a soldier who wore Vishnyovyetski's colors was incredible.

"Keep quiet," said the old officer, "this gentleman is my guest."

"I will—I will take you to court—to jail," screamed Chaplinski, caring for nobody.

Skshetuski now stod up his full height, but did not draw his sabre; he grasped it, however, in the middle, and put the cross hilt tight under Chaplinski's nose.

"Just smell that," he said coolly.

"Damn you—here servants," cried Chaplinski, and tried to seize the hilt.

But he was not quick enough to draw the sword. The young commander twisted him round, seized him by the collar with one hand, and by the trousers below the belt with the other, and in spite of his struggles, lifted him bodily, and carried him across the room between the benches to the door, calling out:

"Brothers, make room for this horned beast, for he will hurt."

When he reached the door, he pushed Chaplinski against it, opened it, and then threw the vice-starosta out into the street.

Then he returned quietly and sat down beside Zatsvilikhovski as before.

An absolute silence reigned in the room for a few minutes, The strength which Skshetuski had displayed won the respect of the nobles present. In a little while, however, the whole room shook with laughter.

"Long live Vishnyovyetski's man?" cried all.

"He has fainted, he has fainted and is covered with blood," cried others, who out of curiosity peeped through the door, to see what Chaplinski was going to do.

"His servants are lifting him up."

Only a small part of the partisans of the vice-starosta were silent, and as they had not courage to take his part, they simply scowled at Skshetuski.

"To speak the truth to him causes this hound to snap at one's heels," said Zatsvilikhovski.

"He is a cur, not a hound!" said a stout noble as he approached. He had a cataract in one eye, and a hole in his forehead, the size of a dollar, through which the naked bone showed. "He is a cur, not a true hound. Allow me," said he, turning to Skshetuski, "to offer you my regards. I am Zagloba, my escutcheon is a star in the forehead, as anyone may easily tell by this hole, which was made by the bullet of a robber, when I was on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to do penance for the sins of my youth."

"Give us peace!" said Zatsvilikhovski. "Once before, you told us that some one had struck you on the forehead with a glass at Radom."

"A robber's bullet, as sure as I live. The Radom affair is another matter."

"You may perhaps have made a vow to go to the Holy Land, but you have never been there, that is certain."

"I did not reach there, for I received my crown of martyrdom in Galatz. If I lie, I am an arch-dog, and no nobleman."

"Yes, and a dog that can bark."

"If I am a rogue, I will be an open one. My regards to you, Commander."

Meantime, others drew near to make the acquaintance of Skshetuski, and to assure him of their friendship, as they did not like Chaplinski, and were pleased to see him disgraced. It is strange and hardly credible at this day that the entire nobility in the neighborhood of Chigrin, as also the smaller landed proprietors and farmers, and even those serving the Konyetspolskis, all knowing the enmity between Chaplinski and Khmyelnitski, took the part of the latter. Khmyelnitski was known as a distinguished soldier, who had won well-earned laurels in many wars. It was also known that the King himself was on intimate terms with him and prized his opinions very highly. The whole quarrel was looked upon as an ordinary contention between two nobles, such as happen by the thousand, especially in Russian lands. They, therefore, sided with the one most popular, little dreaming of the terrible results that would follow. It was not until later that

their hearts were filled with hatred against Khmyelnitski, as were also the hearts of the nobles and clergy of both rituals.

Men stepped up to Skshetuski with glasses in their hand and said:

"Drink, brother! Drink with me."

"Drink with me also?" "Long live Vishnyovyetski." "So young, and already a lieutenant of the Prince." "Long live Prince Yeremy, the Hetman of Hetmans. We will go with Prince Yeremy to the end of the world. Against Turks and Tartars, and to Constantinople. Long live our gracious Lord and King, Vladislav the Fourth." The one who shouted the loudest was Pan Zagloba. He seemed ready to out-drink and out-talk a whole regiment.

"Sirs," he shouted, so that the window-panes rattled, "I have already sued the Sultan on account of the assault made upon me in Galatz."

"Do not blow so much about yourself, you might get lock-jaw."

"In what way, good sir? *Quatuor articuli judicii castrensis: stuprum, incendium, latrocinium et vis armata alienis aedibus illata.* Was not that *vis armata?*"

"You cluck like a woodcock."

"I will go before the highest court."

"Oh keep quiet."

"I will obtain judgment. I will show him up as a rascal, and then war—even with infamy."

"Here's to your health, gentlemen."

Skshetuski broke out laughing with the others, for the wine had begun to take effect upon him. But the noble continued like a woodcock delighted with its own voice. By good chance his speech was interrupted by another noble, who approached and pulled him by the sleeve, and said with a singing Lithuanian accent:

"Introduce me also, Pan Zagloba, to Pan Skshetuski."

"Oh, certainly, with pleasure."

"Lieutenant, this is Pan Povsinoga."

"Podbipyenta," corrected the noble.

"It's all the same, of the coat of arms of Zervipludri."

"Zervicaptur," corrected the noble again.

"It's all the same, from Psikishki." (Dog's entrails.)

"From Myshikishki," said the nobleman.

"It's all the same, *nescio* whether I prefer mouse or dog entrails, but I am sure that I would not like to live in either,

for to dwell therein is not easy, and to go out is not polite? Sir," he continued to Pan Skshetuski, pointing at the Lithuanian—"for a week I have been drinking at the expense of this noble, who carries a sword at his belt as heavy as his money belt, and a money belt that is as heavy as his wit. But if I have ever drunk at the expense of a more original fellow than this, you may call me as big a fool as this man who pays for my wine."

"He is out with him now," cried laughingly the assembled nobles.

But the Lithuanian did not get angry. He only waved his hand, smiled pleasantly, and answered:

"You should give us peace, it does not sound well."

Skshetuski looked with interest at the stranger who in truth deserved the appellation of an original fellow. In the first place he was so tall, that his head nearly struck the ceiling, and his extraordinary leanness, made him appear still taller. His broad shoulders and sinuous neck betokened great strength, but he was only skin and bone. His stomach had so sunk in beneath his chest that one might have thought he was starving, although he was comfortably dressed in a gray coat of Freiburg cloth, with tight sleeves, and a pair of Swedish high boots, which were just coming into fashion in Litnuania. A broad and well-wadded belt of elk skin for want of support fell to his hips, and from it hung a Crusader's sword, so long that it reached almost to the arm pit of this gigantic man.

But whoever the sword might scare, would soon be reassured by the countenance of its possessor; a face as lean as the entire whole person, adorned with drooping eyebrows and an equally drooping hemp-colored moustache, but with an honest open expression, like that of a child. The drooping brows and moustache gave the face a distressed and sad, and at the same time a comical expression. He looked like a man whom people would take anvantage of, but he pleased Skshetuski because of his honest face and his perfect soldierly self-control.

"Lieutenant," said he, "you are in the service of Prince Vishnyovyetski?"

"At your service."

The Lithuanian folded his hands as if in prayer and raised his eyes heavenward. "Ah, what a warrior he is, what a knight, what a leader!"

"God grant the Commonwealth many such."

"Yes, indeed! Is it possible for me to enter into his service?"

"He would gladly receive you."

At this point Zagloba joined in the conversation.

"The Prince would then have two spits in his kitchen; one would be yourself, and the other your sword. Or, he would employ you as hangman, and would hang the criminals round your neck. Or he will use you as an executioner, or will give orders for the robbers to be hanged on you, or use you as a yard-stick for measuring cloth. Pshaw! As a man and a Catholic, you are not ashamed to be as long as a serpent, or a Pagan lance?"

"It is disgusting to hear it," said the Lithuanian patiently.

"May I ask your name," said Skshetuski, "for when you spoke, Pan Zagloba interrupted us so with his shouting, that I was really unable to catch it."

"Podbipyenta."

"Povsinoga," interrupted Zagloba.

"Zervicaptur of Myshikishki."

"Now you have it straight. I drink his wine, but I'll be hanged if those are not infidel names."

"Is it long since you left Lithuania?" asked the lieutenant.

"I have been in Chigrin just two weeks. When I heard through Pan Zatsvilikovski that you were to pass through Chigrin, I waited in order to present my petition to the Prince with your recommendation."

"May I ask you out of curiosity why you wear such an executioner's sword at your side?"

"This is no executioner's sword, Lieutenant, this is a crusader's sword. I carry it because it is a trophy of war and an heirloom of our family. It did good service at Khoinits in Lithuanian hands and that is why I wear it."

"But it is a frightful weapon and must be tremendously heavy, you must use both hands to it."

"It can be wielded with both hands or one."

"Let me look at it?"

The Lithuanian took the sword off and handed it to Skshetuski, but Skshetuski's hand gave way at its weight. He could neither handle it, nor strike a blow with it with one hand. He could swing it with both hands, but it was still very heavy. Skshetuski felt a little ashamed, and turning to those present, he said: "Now, gentlemen, which of you can describe a cross with this sword?"

"We have all tried it," answered several voices, "but the commissary Pan Zatsvilikovski alone can lift it, and he cannot make a cross with it."

"And you, sir," said Skshetuski, turning to the Lithuanian.

The noble lifted the sword as if it were a slender cane, and whirled it about with the greatest ease, until the room was filled with a swishing sound and a light breeze swept over the faces of those who stood about.

"God be with you," said Skshetuski. "You may be sure of a place in the Prince's service."

"God knows how I desire it, the sword will not get rusty in his service."

"But how about your wits?" said Zagloba. "You cannot manage so well about them?"

Zatsvilikovski now arose and got ready to leave the room with the lieutenant, when a man with snow white hair entered the room and seeing Zatsvilikhovski called out:

"Colonel, I have come here expressly to see you." It was Barabash, the Cossack Colonel.

"Let us go to my quarters?" said Zatsvilikhovski, "the room here is so full of smoke that one can hardly see."

They passed out together and Skshetuski with them. As they crossed the threshold, Barabash asked:

"Is there any news of Khmyelnitski?"

"He has fled to Sich. This officer met him on the steppes."

"Then he did not go by water? I sent a courier to arrest him at Kudak, but as it is, this was of no use."

Then Barabash covered his eyes with his hands and repeated several times:

"Ay, Christ save us! Christ save us!"

"What do you fear?"

"Do you not know what he obtained from me through treachery? Do you know what it means if such documents are published in Sich? Help us, oh Christ? Unless the King makes war on the Musulmans, this will be a spark in a powder magazine."

"Do you predict a rebellion?"

"I do not predict one, I see one, and Khmyelnitski is a better man than Nalevayki and Loboda."

"Who will follow his lead?"

"Who? All the Zaporojians, registered regiments. The townspeople; the peasants; the small land-owners and I know not who besides."

Here Barabash pointed to the market-place and to the people trading there. The whole square was packed with gray oxen which were being driven to Korsun for the soldiers, and with the oxen were a great number of herdsmen, who spent their whole lives in the steppes and deserts, absolutely savage men, having no religion (*"Religionis nullius"* as Voyevoda Kiesel said) of any kind. They looked more like desperados than like shepherds, fearful and terrible, clothed in a variety of lakhmans. Most of them were clad in sheepskin coats, with hair upon the outside, which hung loosely from their shoulders, so that although it was winter time, one could see the bare chest, tanned by the winds of the steppes. They were all armed, but with the most diverse weapons; some had bows and quivers slung across their backs; others bore muskets, or squealers as the Cossacks called them; some carried Tartar swords, others carried scythes, and still others had only a stick with a horse's jaw bone fastened to one end of it. Among them mingled the no less savage, but better armed men from the Nij, who were taking dried fish, game, and mutton-tallow to sell in the camp. Farther on were ox-drivers with salt to sell, bee-hunters from the steppes and forests, bee-farmers with honey, settlers with pitch and tar, peasants with teams, Cossack regulars; Tartars from Byalogrod, and God knows who besides. Loiterers and Siromakhs from the ends of the earth. The town was full of drunken men, who all had quarters in Chigrin, and who indulged in carousals before they sought their beds. A huge fire had been built in the market-place, and here and there a barrel of pitch was burning. On every side was noise and tumult. The piercing notes of the Tartar fifes, and the roll of drums mingled with the bellowing of the oxen, and the softer notes of lyres, to which blind minstrels sang the then popular song.

"Oh bright falcon,
My own true brother,
Thou soarest so high,
Thou seest so far,"

Mingled with the song, sounded the wild shouts of Cossacks who were dancing the tropak in the market-place, completely drunk, and smeared from head to foot with tar. Hu, ha-hu, ha!—it was all so wild and mad. Zatsvilikhovski needed only a glance to convince him that Barabash was right, that it needed but the slightest breath to set free those unbridled elements only too ready to plunder and accustomed

to war with which the whole Ukraine was filled, and just behind these masses stood Sich and the Zaporojians, that had only recently been bridled and kept under according to Maslov Stav, but who were restlessly champing the bit, remembering their old prerogatives and hating commissaries, but representing an organized force. And this force had the sympathy of the unnumbered masses of the peasantry behind it, less patient of control here than in other portions of the Commonwealth because in their vicinity was Chertomelik, where lawlessness, murder, and robbery prevailed. The standard-bearer, who was a Russian and a zealous advocate of Eastern Rites, fell into sad reflections.

He was an old man and he well remembered the times of Nalevayka, Loboda, and Kremski; he knew the Ukraine robber ways perhaps better than any one in Russia, and at the same time, he knew also Khmyelnitski, and knew that this man was worth twenty times as much as Loboda, and Nalevayka. He appreciated, therefore, the danger implied by his flight to Sich, especially on account of the letters from the King, of which Pan Barabash had spoken, which, as he said, were full of promises to the Cossacks, and invited them to rebel.

"Colonel of the Circassians," said he to Barabash, "you ought to ride to Sich, to weaken Khmyelnitski's influence and pacify the people."

"Ensign," answered Barabash, "I will tell you this much, that at the earliest rumor of Khmyelnitski's flight with the documents, half of my Circassians followed him this night. My hour is past—the grave awaits me, not the field-marshal's baton."

In fact Barabash was a valiant soldier, but an old man and without influence.

Meantime, they had arrived at Zatsvilikhovski's quarters. The old officer had regained the composure that was natural to his gentle disposition, and as they sat down to half a pot of mead, he said cheerfully:

"All these things are but trifles, if, as it is said, war against the Mussulmans is preparing. And it certainly must be so, for although the Commonwealth does not desire war, and the Diet has opposed him, the King can yet assert his will. This fire can be employed against the Turks, and in any event, we have time upon our side. I will go myself to the Governor in Cracow, will inform him how matters stand, and will beg him,

as he is nearest to us, to come to our aid with his forces. Whether I shall succeed, I know not, for though he is a brave lord, and a warrior, he is over-confident in himself, and his army. You, Colonel, hold the Circassians in check; and you, lieutenant, warn the Prince, when you reach Lubni to keep special watch on Sich. Should they begin operations I repeat we still have time. There are not many people in Sich just now; they are out fishing and hunting, or in the villages round about the Ukraine. Before they gather together, the waters of the Dnieper may be considerably swollen. In addition to this the name of the Prince is feared, and if they find out that he has his eye upon Chertomelik they will probably keep quiet."

"I could, if it were necessary, start from Chigrin in a couple of days," said the lieutenant.

"That's good. Two or three days make no difference. And you, Colonel of the Circassians, send couriers to inform Prince Dominik, and the Royal Standard-Bearer, but I see that you are already asleep."

In fact Barabash had folded his hands across his stomach and was fast asleep. Presently, he even began to snore. When the Cossack Colonel was not eating or drinking (which he loved above everything) he was sleeping.

"See here," said Zatsvilikhovski, softly to the lieutenant, "With the assistance of an old man like this, the statesman at Warsaw expect to hold the Cossacks in check. May God help them! They even trust Khmyelnitski himself, and the Chancellor has entered into negotiations with him; he will most likely find his confidence betrayed."

The lieutenant sighed to show his sympathy. Barabash only snored louder, and murmured in his sleep:

"Save us, Oh Christ! Save us!"

"When do you expect to leave Chigrin?" asked the ensign.

"I must wait two days for Chaplinski, who will certainly want to call me out to wipe out the indignity he has suffered."

"He will never do that. He would sooner send his servants against you, if you did not wear the Prince's colors—but it is a bad business to quarrel with the Prince, even for the servants of the Konyetspolski."

"I shall send him word that I await him and shall leave the town in two or three days. I do not fear an ambush while I have a sword at my side, and a handful of men."

With these words the lieutenant took his leave of the old ensign and departed.

There was such a bright glow in the sky above the town from the great fires in the market-place, that one might have imagined that the whole of Chigrin was in flames, especially as the noise and shouts grew louder as night approached. The Jews dared not venture from their houses. From every corner crowds of herders howled their melancholy songs of the steppes, while savage Zaporojians danced about the fires, throwing their caps in the air, firing off their guns and drinking gorzalka by the quart. Here and there arose a fight which was quelled by the starosta's men. The lieutenant was forced to beat his way through the crowd with the handle of his sabre, and hearing the noisy Cossacks, it seemed to him at times as if the rebellion had already broken out. He fancied also that he could hear subdued curses. The words of Barabash still rang in his ears: "Christ save us! Christ save us!" and his heart beat faster.

Meanwhile the songs of the herders grew louder in the town and the Zaporojians continued to fire and fill themselves with gorzalka.

The noise of the firing and the wild "U-ha!—U-ha!" still echoed in his ears as he lay down to sleep in his quarters.

CHAPTER III.

A few days later, the Lieutenant and his retinue were marching with quick pace towards Lubni. When they had forded the Dnieper, they marched along the broad highway across the steppes which connects Chigrin with Lubni, winding through Juki, Semimogil and Khorol. Similar roads led from the capital of the Prince's territory to Kiev. In earlier times, before the battle which Hetman Jolkyevski fought against Solonitza, there were no roads at all; one had to travel from Lubni to Kiev across the steppes and over the desert; the way to Chigrin was by water, and on returning one passed through Khorol. Taking it all together, the country beyond the Dnieper, the former land of the Polovyets, was a desert, scarcely more populous than the Wild Lands, often infested by Tartars, and without protection from the bands of Zaporojians.

On the banks of the Sula, rose immense forests, teeming with life, seldom traversed by the foot of man. At certain places on the slopes of the Sula, and Ruda, Sleporod, Korovaya, Orjavtsa, Pshol, and other greater and smaller rivers and streams, marshes had formed. These were partly overgrown with thick brush, and forests, and partly open land resembling a meadow. In these woods and morasses, animals, of all descriptions found a convenient hiding-place. In the darkest depths of the forests roamed an immense number of aurochs,[1] bears, and wild-boars, and also an incalculable number of wolves, lynxes, martens, herds of deer, and red antelopes. In the swamps and pools, beavers built their dams; and the saying was current among Zaporojians, that among these beavers, there were some a century old, and snow-white with age.

On the high dry steppes, roamed herds of wild horses with shaggy heads and blood-shot eyes. The rivers teemed with fish, and water-fowl. It was a wonderful country, half-asleep,

[1] Literally the "bearded Turs" (Aurochs.)

but full of traces of previous human habitation. Everywhere might be seen the ruins of former dwellings. Lubni and Khorol themselves had risen from such ashes; everywhere were grave-mounds, new and old overgrown with shrubs and trees. And here as in the Wild Lands, ghosts and vampires appeared at night. Old Zaporojians recounted to one another, as they sat around their fires, the wonderful things that happened in those forest depths, where even now the howling of strange animals could be heard. Weird noises, half-human and half-brute, as if the terrible cries of battle mingled with those of the chase. From rivers and lakes came muffled sounds as of the ringing of bells from cities that lay submerged beneath their waters. It was not a hospitable, accessible country, for in some places it was too wet and soggy, in others there was lack of water, and the land was parched and dry; moreover, it was not safe for human habitation, for when colonists settled there for agriculture they were soon swept away by Tartar invasions. These Zaporojians were the only people who visited the country in order to trap beaver, and to kill game, and catch fish. For in times of peace the majority of the people at Sich and Nij, spent most of their time in hunting, or as it was called in doing business on all the rivers, in all the rivers, forests, marshes, and glens; beaver-hunting in spots whose whereabouts were known to very few. But settled life still sought to find an abiding-place in this country, like plants which endeavor to take root in the soil wherever they can, and which, though frequently torn up, spring up again in unexpected places.

On these desert places arose cities, settlements, colonies, villages, and farms. The soil was in many places fertile, and freedom allured. But it was not until the country came into the possession of the Princes Vishnyovyetski that life began to flourish there. Prince Michael after his marriage with a Mohilovian lady, began to cultivate his territory beyond the Dnieper. He attracted people thither, settled the desert places, gave exemption from military services for thirty years, built monasteries, introduced his princely authority. Even the settlers who had come into the country at some early period, and thought that they were on their own ground, were glad to join the ranks of the Prince's tenants, for by so doing they put themselves under the protection of a mighty power that could shield and defend them from the Tartars and from the swarms of the even more dangerous Nijovs (lowlanders).

But real activity only flourished under the iron rule of young Prince Yeremy. His territory began immediately outside Chigrin and extended far away to the confines of Konotop and Romni. These were not all his princely possessions, but, starting from the province of San Domirski his territory extended to the provinces of Volhynia, Russia, and Kiev; but his domain beyond the Dnieper was the eye in the head of the victor of Putyvla.

Long did the Tartar lurk on the borders of the Orla, and the Vorskla, and sniffed like a wolf before he ventured to urge his horses northwards. The Nijovs dared make no trouble. The restless bands on the territory became subjects; while bands of marauders who had long lived by violence and raids, were now held in check by the military outposts on the borders of the territory, and like chained dogs, showed their teeth threateningly to passers-by.

Thus development and a flourishing condition of things came to pass. Roads were made on the traces of the old highways; rivers were dammed by Tartar slaves, or by the Nijovs who had been captured with weapons in their hands in acts of violence. Where once the night wind had blustered through the reeds, where wolves and vampires had howled, now mill-wheels sounded. Beside the wind-mills more than four hundred mill-wheels ground grain beyond the Dnieper. Forty thousand tenants poured their tributes into the coffers of the Prince; the forest swarmed with apiaries, and on their borders there rose new villages, hamlets, and farm-houses. On the steppes side by side with wild horses, there grazed domestic cattle and horses. The needless monotony of the steppes and forest was broken by the smoke from cottage chimneys and by the gilded spires of the churches and chapels. The waste had been transformed into a populous country.

The Commander therefore, rode on gayly, leisurely, as though he were travelling over his own lands, and found secure resting-places along the road. It was the beginning of January, 1648, but the unusual and remarkably mild winter brought but little suffering. The breath of spring was in the air; over the earth gleamed many little puddles caused by the thaw; the fields were clothed with green; the sun's rays were so powerful that at mid-day furs were as burdensome as they are in summer. The Commander's suite had been considerably augmented, for, in Chigrin, it was joined by a Wallachian embassy which the Hospodar had sent to Lubni in

the person of Pan Rozvan-Ursu. An escort accompanied the embassy, together with wagons and servants; travelling with the Lieutenant also was our friend Pan Longin Podbipyenta, of the House of Torn-Cowl, with his long sword at his side, and followed by some servants.

The bright sun, the clear weather and the breath of approaching spring filled all hearts with gladness; the Lieutenant was all the more happy for he was returning from a long journey to the roof of the prince which was also his own, and, as he had fulfilled his mission well, he was sure of a hearty welcome.

But he had other grounds for his gladness.

Besides the favor of the prince whom the lieutenant loved with all his heart, there was in Lubni a certain pair of black eyes as sweet as honey. These eyes belonged to Anusia Borzobahata Khrasyenska, lady in waiting to Princess Grizelda; the most beautiful of all the ladies of the princely household. She was a great flirt, whom every man in Lubni sighed for, but who appeared to care for no one in particular. Princess Grizelda maintained a strict propriety and a rigid austerity in her court, but this, however, did not deter the young people from exchanging loving glances and ardent sighs. Pan Skshetuski in common with others, directed many gleaming glances toward the dark-eyed beauty, and sometimes when he was alone in his quarters, he would take up his lute and sing:

"Thou art the fairest of the fair;"

or

"The Tartar makes captives of people,
But thou makest captives of hearts."

But as he was a joyous man, and a thorough-going soldier, entirely devoted to his profession, he did not take it very seriously to heart that Anna smiled upon Pan Vykhovts of the Wallachian cavalry, or upon Pan Vurtsel, of the artillery, or upon Pan Volodiyovski of the dragoons, as well as upon himself, and that she even smiled upon Pan Baronovski of the huzzars, although he had gray hair and lisped, because a musket-ball had smashed the roof of his mouth. Our Lieutenant had even crossed swords once with Pan Volodiyovski on Anusia's account. But if he was forced to remain too long in Lubni without any war against the Tartars, life became tedious to him, even in Anusia's presence, and if he was called to the front, he went gladly without sorrow or regret.

At the same time he was always glad to come home again, and as he was now returning from the Crimea after bringing his mission to a satisfactory conclusion, he hummed joyfully to himself as he galloped alongside of Pan Longin, who bestrode an enormous Livonian mare, and maintained his usual thoughtful and serious expression. The wagons of the embassy, and of the escort, remained some distance in the rear.

"The ambassador is sleeping like a log in his carriage," said the lieutenant. "He chattered to me about Wallachia until he grew weary. I listened to him out of curiosity. It is a rich country—nothing else—excellent climate, gold wines, tropical fruits, and cattle without number. I thought to myself: Our prince is a descendant from a Mohilovian, and has just as good a right to wear the crown of the Hospodars as any one else. Prince Michael had made good his title to it. Wallachia is not new to our master, he has already beaten the Turks, the Tartars, the Wallachians, and the Transylvanians on its soil——."

"But the people there are not so hardy as we are, so Pan Zagloba told me in Chigrin," said Longin, "and if I did not believe what he said there is a confirmation of the fact in the prayer-book."

"What, in the prayer-book?"

"I have one here, and I can show it to you. I always carry one with me."

Saying, he unfastened the straps of his saddle-bag and took out a small book, neatly bound in calf, and kissing it piously, he turned a dozen pages and said: "Read."

Skshetuski began: "We flee to thee for refuge, Holy Mother of God,"—Where is there anything about the Wallachians? What are you talking about? This is an antiphone."

"Read on."

"——That we may be worthy of the promises of the Lord through Christ, Amen."

"Well, now come to the question."——

Skshetuski read on: Question: "Why do they call the Wallachian cavalry light cavalry?" Answer: "Because it runs away lightly. H'm! true!" "Well, indeed, but there is a strange mixture of subjects in this prayer-book."

"Yes, because this is a military book where the prayers are interspersed with various military instructions, wherein you can get information of all nations, and can find out which

are good and which are bad. As for the Wallachians, it is evident that they are cowardly servants, and above all, great traitors."

"That they are traitors is certain. That was proven by the adventures of Prince Michael. And, to tell the truth, I have also heard that the Wallachian is by nature a bad soldier, although the Prince has an extraordinary fine Wallachian regiment commanded by Pan Bikhovyets. But I am not positive if in the whole regiment are to be found twenty Wallachians."

"What think you lieutenant? Has the prince many men under arms?"

"There may be eight thousand, not counting the Cossacks who are in quarters. But Zatsvilikhovski told me that fresh troops had been called out."

"Then will God give a war under the Prince?"

"It is said that great preparations are being made for a war with the Turks; that the King is to advance with the entire force of the Commonwealth. I know that the gifts to the Tartars have been kept back, and that they dare not stir for fear of consequences. While I was in the Crimea, I heard of it, and it was doubtless on this account that I was so well received; for the report is current that if the King marches forth with the Hetmans, the Prince will attack the Crimea and make an end of the Tartars. One thing is certain, no one else would be intrusted with such an undertaking.

Pan Longin raised his hands and eyes towards heaven.

"Grant, gracious God, such a holy war to the honor of Christendom and our people; and grant to me, a sinner, that I may fulfil my vow, that I may find happiness in battle, or meet an honorable death."

"Then you have made a vow upon this war?"

"To such a noble knight as yourself I will lay bare all the secrets of my soul although I have much to tell; but if you will lend me your ear, I will begin. *Incipiam*, you know my coat-of-arms is Cowl-Trencher, which arises from the following story: 'When my ancestor, Stoveiko Podbipyenta saw near Grunwald three knights in Monkish garb riding towards him, he charged them, and with one stroke cut off their heads and this fact is related by all the chroniclers with much praise for my ancestors.'"

"Your ancestor's hand was no lighter than your own, and he was rightly given the name Cowl-Trencher."

"The King gave him a coat-of-arms on which were three

goats' heads on a field argent, as a remembrance of those knights for similar heads were graven on their shields. This coat-of-arms together with the sword which I carry, was bequeathed by my ancestor Podbipyenta to his heirs, with the wish that they might maintain the glory of the race and of the sword."

"Certainly, you come of noble stock!"

Here Longin began to sigh pitifully; and as soon as he seemed to feel more cheerful, he continued:

"I am the last of my race. I made a vow in Troki to the Most Holy Virgin, that I would live in chastity, and would not enter the married state until I had, with this sword, cut off three heads at one blow, like my ancestor Stovieko Podbipyenta. O, gracious Heaven, Thou seest that I have done all that was in my power! I have kept my vow of chastity to this day; I have bid my yearning heart be still; I have sought war; I have had no luck. . . ."

The lieutenant laughed under his moustache.

"You have not cut off the three heads?"

"Why, I have not had the opportunity. I have had no luck. Two I have had the chance at, but never three. One can hardly beg enemies to place themselves in a line to be cut down. God only knows my sorrow. The strength is in my bones. Fortune is there, but youth is gone. I shall soon be forty-five years old; my heart pines for love; my race is dying out, and the three heads have not yet come! . . . . that is the kind of Cowl-Trencher I am! the laughing stock of men, as Zagloba rightly says, but I bear everything with patience, and offer myself to the Lord Jesus."

The Lithuanian sighed so heavily that even the mare, evidently from sympathy with her master, also began to sigh and to snort piteously.

"I can tell you one thing," said the lieutenant, "if you find no apportunity under Prince Yeremy, you will find one nowhere."

"God grant it!" answered Longin. "That is why I am seeking the Prince's favor."

The conversation was interrupted by the unusual sound of flapping wings. As we have already said, this winter the birds did not migrate; the rivers were not frozen, and consequently there was an extraordinary number, especially of aquatic birds, in the marshes. Just as the Lieutenant and Longin were approaching the bank of the Kahamlik, they suddenly

saw above their heads a whole flock of cranes flying so low that one could have thrown a stick at them. They made loud noises as they flew, and instead of alighting among the reeds they unexpectedly rose higher into the air.

"They fly as if they were pursued," said Skshetuski.

"Ha! Did you see that?" said Pan Longin, pointing to a white bird who darted through the air in a diagonal line and sought to overtake the cranes.

"A falcon! a falcon! He won't let them alight," cried the commander. "The ambassador has falcons. He must have let one loose!"

Just then the ambassador came up to them, riding at quick pace on his black Anatolian horse, and following him were some of the servants' conveyances.

"Pan Commander, I invite you to enjoy some sport," he said.

"Is that your Excellency's falcon?"

"Yes; a fine one, you shall see. . . ."

They galloped on three abreast. The Wallachian falconer followed with the hoop. He fixed his eyes sharply on the bird, shouted with all his might, and incited the falcon to the fray. The powerful bird had meanwhile forced the cranes to rise in the air. Then, with lightning swiftness, he rose higher himself and hung suspended above them. The cranes formed in an immense circle, and rustled their wings like a wind storm. A threatening sound filled the air. The birds stretched out their necks, turning their beaks upward, like spears and awaited the attack.

The falcon circled above them. Now he would sink a little; then he would rise in the air as if he were hesitating about swooping down on the hundred sharp beaks that awaited him. His feathers gleamed in the sunlight and looked as bright as the sun itself in the unclouded blue of the sky. All at once, instead of swooping down upon the cranes, he darted off like an arrow into space, and disappeared among the trees and reeds.

Skshetuski was the first to rush on in search for him; the Ambassador and Longin followed his lead.

At the bend of the road the Lieutenant suddenly reined in his horse. A strange sight met his eye. In the middle of the highway lay an overturned carriage with a broken axle. The horses, harnessed, were held by two Cossack boys; no coachman was in sight. He had evidently ridden off to look for

assistance. Standing by the carriage were two women: one dressed in a fox-skin cloak and a fox-skin cap with a round brim. Her face was coarse and masculine. The other was a young lady with regular, clear-cut features. Upon the shoulder of this young girl was perched a falcon; his wings were spread over her breast and he was stroking her with his beak.

The lieutenant pulled up his horse so suddenly that its hoofs dug deep into the sand on the highway. Then he put his hand up to his cap, but did not know in his embarrassment what he ought to say;—whether he should salute the ladies, or ask about the falcon. The secret of his embarrassment was this, that beneath the marten-cap two eyes looked out—eyes beside which even those of Anusia Borzobohata would lose their lustre, as a candle would be dimmed by the light of a torch. Above these eyes were dark, silky brows, like two delicate bows. The blushing cheeks bloomed like the fairest flower; and between the rosy, half-open lips peeped teeth like pearls, while from under the cap she wore floated luxuriant black tresses. "Is that Juno herself, or some other divinity," thought the lieutenant, as he gazed at the slender, well-formed figure, at the fair, swelling bosom, and at the white falcon perched on her shoulder. Our lieutenant stood there with his cap off, and stared as at a fairy scene; but his eyes gleamed, and his heart thumped in his breast. He was about to say, "If thou art mortal and not a goddess. . . ." but just at that moment up came the Ambassador and Pan Longin, and with them the falconer with his hoop. When the "goddess" saw this, she held out her hand to the falcon, which stepped down from her arm to perch on her hand, putting one foot before the other. The lieutenant wanted to get ahead of the falconer and take the bird off her hand, when suddenly a strange omen occurred. The falcon left one foot on the hand of the girl, and, with the other, he clutched the Lieutenant's hand; and instead of stepping on to it, he began to scream for joy and to drag the two hands together with such force that they touched each other. The lieutenant felt a cold chill come over him and the falcon would not let himself be taken until the falconer had drawn the hood over his head. Then the old lady began to speak.

"Sir knight," she said, "whoever you be, you will not refuse your protection to two women who have been left without assistance on their journey and who do not know what to do. It is not more than three[1] miles to our home, but the

[1] A Russian mile is equivalent to nearly five American miles.

THE FALCON PERCHED ON HER HAND.

axle of our carriage is broken, and there is nothing for us but to stay all night on the open plains. I have sent the coachman to my sons to ask them to send us a carriage; but before he reaches them and returns to us, it will be dark, and we are afraid to stay in this dreadful place, for there are grave-mounds close by.

The old lady spoke rapidly, and in such a coarse voice that the lieutenant was surprised; but he answered politely:

"Could you imagine that we could leave you and your beautiful daughter without protection? We are journeying to Lubni; where we are soldiers in the service of His Excellency, Prince Yeremy and we have our own route, it is true; but even so, we would willingly take the same road as you do if our company is agreeable to you. As for the carriage, we have none, for my companions and I pursue our journey soldier fashion, on horseback; but the ambassador has one, and I know that as a courteous knight, he will willingly place it at your disposal."

The ambassador raised his high sable shako, for knowing Polish, he understood the conversation. He then greeted the ladies as a polite boyar, and ordered the falconer to bring up the carriages that had remained some distance behind.

Meanwhile the lieutenant looked at the young lady who became abashed at his searching glances, and cast her eyes down to the ground. The old lady with the Cossack features continued however:

"May God Almighty reward you for this aid; and as it is still a long way to Lubni, let me beg you not to despise my roof and that of my sons, beneath which we will gladly welcome you. We are from Rozloga-Siromakhi. I am the widow of Prince Kurtsevich, and this is not my daughter, but the daughter of the elder Kurtsevich, a brother of my husband, who entrusted his orphan to our care. My sons are now at home. I am returning home from Circassia, where I have been to make a vow to the Holy Immaculate. On our way home this accident has happened to us; and if you gentlemen had not been so polite, we should have been obliged to stay here all night."

The princess would have continued talking; but in the distance were seen the carriages of the ambassador approaching, accompanied by Skshetuski's soldiers.

"Then you are the widow of Prince Vasil Kurtsevich?" asked the lieutenant.

"No," said the princess sharply, and even angrily. "I am the widow of Constantine, and this is Vasil's daughter, Helena," she said, pointing to the young lady.

"We hear a great deal about Prince Vasil in Lubni. He was a brave soldier and the intimate and confidant of the departed Prince Michael."

"I have never been in Lubni," said Pani Kurtsevich pointedly, "and as to his valor I know nothing; as to his later conduct, that hardly bears remembering, as everyone knows about it."

At these words, Helena's head sank on her breast like a broken flower, and the lieutenant answered sharply:

"You should not say that. On account of a frightful error in human justice, which sentenced him to forfeit his life and property, Prince Vasil was obliged to save himself by flight; but later on his innocence was established, and he was reinstated in public opinion as a man of honor; and all the more honor is due him in proportion to the injustice that was done him."

The princess looked keenly at the lieutenant; and upon her unpleasant coarse features, anger was plainly visible, but Skshetuski, although a young man, had so much knightly dignity and self-possession that she dared not answer him. She turned instead to her neice Helena.

"It is not right that you should hear this. Come here, and see that the baggage is put into the carriage, in which through the permission of these gentlemen, we are to continue our journey."

"Permit me to assist you, young lady," said the lieutenant.

They walked together to the carriage, but no sooner did they stand opposite to each other on either side of the door than the silken lashes of the young princess were raised and her glance fell upon that of the lieutenant like a bright warm sun ray.

"How can I thank you," she said with a voice which seemed like the sweetest music to Skshetuski, like the tones of a lute, or of a flute. "How can I thank you for having stood up for my father's honor—for condemning the injustice that was done him by his nearest relatives."

"Fair lady," answered the lieutenant, who felt his heart melting like snow in spring, "God forgive me if for such thanks I would not go through fire or even spill my blood. But where the pleasure in doing is so great, the merit is

small, and for such a trifle it does not become me to accept the payment of thanks from your mouth."

"If you value them lightly I cannot, as a poor orphan, show my gratitude in any other way."

"I do not undervalue them, but I would wish to deserve such a great favor by a long, faithful, knightly service; and I beg only that you will grant me such a service."

At these words, the young princess blushed like a crimson rose, and appeared embarrassed, but she suddenly paled, and placing her hands before her face, said in a tearful voice:

"This service would bring you only misfortune."

The lieutenant leaned across the door of the carriage, and said softly and tenderly:

"Let it bring what God will; I would still fall at your feet, and pray for it!"

"It is not possible, knight, that you who have only just seen me, should wish joyfully to undertake this service."

"I had scarcely beheld you when I seemed to forget my own existence completely; and I felt that a hitherto free soldier would now be forced to become a slave; but it seems to be the will of God. Love is like the arrow that unexpectedly strikes the breast; and I, too, feel its power, although I would not have believed it yesterday had any one foretold it."

"If you would not believe it yesterday, how can you believe it to-day?"

"Time will prove it better than I can, and you can judge of my sincerity at this moment not only by my words, but by my face."

The silken lashes were again raised and the princess's eyes met the manly noble features of the young soldier; and such an enraptured expression was in his eyes that a deep blush overspread her face; but her gaze did not falter and he drank in all the sweetness of those wonderful eyes. As though they had just met on the highway of the steppes, they looked at one another like two beings in whom love had simultaneously awakened; two beings that were made for each other and whose souls flew to meet one another like doves.

The shrill voice of the Princess Constantine calling the girl, put an end to this moment of rapture. The carriages had arrived, the servants began to transfer the baggage, and it was not long before all was in readiness.

His Excellency, Pan Rozvan-Ursu, as a courteous Boyar, had given up his own carriage to the ladies, the lieutenant mounted his horse, and all continued the journey.

Day was already dying. The waters of the Kahamlik glistened in the golden light—from the setting sun and the purple twilight. Light clouds, changing gradually to crimson, pile themselves high in the sky, lingered there awhile as though weary of wandering and as if they were sleeping in some strange cradle. Skshetuski rode alongside the young princess in silence; for he felt as if he could not continue their recent talk before strangers; and mere empty words were impossible to him now. In his heart was rapture; but his head buzzed as if from wine.

The whole caravan moved briskly along. The silence was broken only by the snorting of the horses, or by the clank of the stirrups. In the rear the soldiers struck up a Wallachian strain, but they did not keep it up; and then Longin sang through his nose a pious chant:

"From Heaven I have commanded
That everlasting light may shine;
Also in thickest clouds of night,
Have I the world enwrapped."

The night had fallen. The stars twinkled in the heavens; and above the damp meadows a white mist rose like a boundless sea.

They had come to the forest, but had scarcely ridden a few furlongs when the sound of horses' hoofs was heard approaching, and five horsemen appeared before the caravan. They were the young princes who had been informed by the coachman of the accident that had happened to their mother, and were hastening to meet her with a carriage and four horses.

"Is it you, my little sons?" cried the old princess,

The horsemen rode up beside the carriage.

"We, mother!"

"Remain there! Thanks to these gentlemen, I am no longer in need of assistance. Let me present my sons to your Excellency—Simeon, Yur, Andrejey, and Nikolay—and who is the fifth," she exclaimed, looking more closely. "Why! if my old eyes do not deceive me, it is Bohun. Eh!"

The young princess suddenly leaned back into the depths of the carriage.

"At your service, Princess; and yours, Panna Helena," said the fifth horseman.

"Bohun," said the elder lady, "have you just come from your regiment, you hawk, and with your theorbo? Welcome! welcome!—Well, little sons, I have already invited these gentlemen to stay over night at Rosloga, and now do your share of courtesy. When guests are in the house God is in the house. You are very welcome to our house, gentlemen!"

The Bulyhovs took off their hats saying:

"We humbly invite you, sirs, to ur modest home."

"They have already promised me; his Excellency, the ambassador, and the lieutenant; we shall entertain noble knights, but I do not know if the gentlemen who are accustomed to court life will be able to enjoy our simple fare."

"We are accustomed to soldier's fare, not to courtly dishes," said Skshetuski.

And Pan Rozvan-Ursu added:

"And I have enjoyed hospitality in the country-houses of the nobility; and I know that often the court dishes could not be compared with them."

The carriages proceeded on their journey and the old princess continued:

"Our best days have long since passed. In Volhynia and Lithuania there are Kurtseviches who keep up state and live like gentlemen; but they will have nothing to do with their poor relations. May God punish them for it. With us you will find Cossack poverty that you will be graciously pleased to excuse, and must accept our hospitality, as it is offered, with good heart. My five sons and myself own a little hamlet and a few farms, and this young lady is under our care."

These words astonished the lieutenant, for he had heard in Lubni that Rosloga was a magnificent property, and besides that that it had belonged to Prince Vasil, Princess Helena's father. However, it did not seem just the thing to ask how it had come into the hands of Constantine and his widow.

"You say you have five sons," said Pan Rozvan.

"I had five, like young lions—" answered the princess; "but the eyes of the eldest were burned out with torches by the heathens in Byalogrod. He lost his mind in consequence. When my other sons go to war I stay at home alone with him and my niece here, who gives me more trouble than pleasure."

The contemptuous manner in which the old princess spoke of her niece was so evident that it did not escape the watchfulness of the lieutenant. His anger rose, and he was on the verge of uttering an ugly oath; but the words died on his lips as he looked at the young princess, and saw by the moonlight, that her eyes were wet with tears.

"What is the matter? Why do you cry?" he asked softly.

The young princess was silent.

"I cannot see you shed tears," said Skshetuski, bending towards her; and as he saw that the old princess was in conversation with the Pan Rozvan, and had her head turned away, he added: "For God's sake, speak even one word. God is my witness that I would sacrifice blood and health to comfort you."

Suddenly he felt that one of the horsemen had come up so close to him that the flanks of their horses touched.

Conversation with the young lady was interrupted. Skshetuski turned his head in surprise and in anger toward the audacious intruder.

In the moonlight he saw two eyes staring at him boldly, defiantly, and scornfully. The dreadful eyes gleamed like those of a wolf in a dark forest.

"What the devil is it?" thought the lieutenant. "A demon, or what?" and then he asked, looking at those fiery eyes:

"Why dost thou jostle me so? Why dost thou fasten thine eyes on me?"

The horseman answered nothing, but continued to stare fiexdly and boldly.

"If it is too dark for thee to see, I will strike a light; and if the highway is too narrow, then be off into the steppes," said the lieutenant, in a louder tone.

"And thou, knave, see that thou comest away from that carriage before we are out of the steppes!" answered the horseman.

The lieutenant who was a man of action, instead of replying, gave his opponent's horse such a dig in the ribs with his foot that the poor creature groaned, and with one bound, landed on the extreme edge of the highway.

His rider pulled him up suddenly; and for an instant it looked as if he were going to attack the lieutenant; but all at once, the shrill, commanding tone of the old princess called out:

"Bohun, what is the matter with you?"

These words had a magic effect. The horseman turned his horse's head and, crossing to the other side of the carriage, rode beside the old lady who proceeded.

"What ails you, eh? Mind, you are not in Pereyaslav, nor in Crimea; but in Rozloga. Remember that, and now ride ahead and guide the carriages, for we are coming to the ravine and it is dark there. Hurry Siromakh!"

Skshetuski was as much surprised as annoyed. This Bohun evidently sought an opportunity to insult him, but what reason had he to do so? Why this unexpected attack? Then it suddenly occurred to him that the Princess Helena was the cause of the contention; and this idea was confirmed when he looked in her face and noticed, in spite of the darkness, that it was colorless, and that her features expressed dismay.

Meanwhile Bohun had ridden quite a distance ahead as the princess had commanded him. Now she looked after him, and speaking half to herself and half to the lieutenant, said:

"That is a mad fellow, a perfect devil of a Cossack."

"He does not seem to be quite right in the head," said Skshetuski, disdainfully. "Is he a Cossack in your sons' service?" The old Princess threw herself back in her carriage.

"What do you say? That is Lieutenant-Colonel Bohun, the celebrated knight, and friend of my sons, and to me a sixth son. It cannot be possible that you have not heard his name. He is known far and wide."

In truth Skshetuski knew his name well. Among the names of the various Cossack Colonels and atamans, that of Bohun was on every lip, on both sides of the Dnieper. Blind beggars sang songs about Bohun at all the fairs and in the wine shops. Whence he came and who he was, no one knew. One thing was certain,—the steppes were his cradle; and the Dnieper, the Perogen and the Chertomelik with its labyrinth of sharp bends, with its bays, rocks, islands, ravines, and reedy marshes, were his playground. From infancy he had grown up in the most intimate association and brotherhood with this wild world.

In times of peace, he went with the rest fishing and hunting, glided in and out among the bends of the Dnieper; waded through marsh and reeds along with crowds of half-naked companions, or spent whole months in the depths of the forest. His schools were raids to the Wild Lands, among the Tartar herds of cattle and horses, setting traps, fighting, expeditions among the nomadic tribes on the coast; expeditions

to Byalogrod, Wallachia, or else by boat to the Black Sea. He knew no days but on horseback, no nights but by the watch-fires on the steppes. From childhood he was the idol of all Nij; he early became a leader, and it was not long before he surpassed all in daring. He was ready to ride to Bakhch Serai with a hundred men, and to make a conflagration under the very eyes of the Khan. He laid camps and villages in ashes, slaughtered the inhabitants, and ordered the Murzas to be torn asunder by horses. He raged like a hurricane and ravaged like death; on the water he fell like a madman on the Turkish galleys; he ventured into the deepest depths of the forest; he crept as they used to say, into the jaws of the lion. Many of the expeditions that he undertook were sheer folly. Others less bold, less venturesome, had found their death by being impaled in Stambul, or perished at the oars of Turkish galleys. He always came back safe and with rich booty. It was said, that he had enormous treasures and had hidden them in secret places on the Dnieper. But at times he was seen stamping with muddy boots on gold embroidered draperies, placing cushions under his horse's hoofs; or clothed in damask soiling himself with tar, on purpose to show his Cossack disdain for gorgeous clothing and furniture. He abided long in no one place; his acts were governed by his moods. At times when he was in Chigrin, Cherkass, or Pereyaslav, he would riot with the other Zaporojians; at others he would live like a mink, spoke to no one and fled into the steppes. At times he surrounded himself with blind wandering minstrels whose music and songs he listened to all day long and whom he loaded with gold. With the nobility he could be a courtly knight, with the Cossacks, the wildest of Cossacks, among knights, a knight, among robbers, a robber. Many thought him crazy for he had an unbridled, wild spirit. Why he lived in the world, what he wanted, what he was striving for, whom he served,—he knew not himself. He served the steppes, the tempests, war, love, and his own fancy. It was this temperament, which distinguished him from other boors and assassins and from the ordinary herd of robbers who had only plunder as their object and who cared not whether they plundered Tartars or their own brothers. Bohun indulged in plunder, but war was dearer to him than booty. He loved danger for its own sake; he paid for songs with gold; he sought fame; and was careless about the rest. Of all leaders he best personified Cossack knight-

hood and so songs chose him for their darling and his name was famous throughout the Ukraine. Lately he had become lieutenant-colonel of the Pereyaslav regiment, but he now exercised the authority of colonel, for the old Loboda held his baton with a feeble hand.

Skshetuski knew well therefore, who Bohun was, and when he asked the old princess, if he was a Cossack in the service of her sons, he did so with intentional contempt, for he saw in him an enemy, and in spite of the fame of this robber leader, the blood of the lieutenant boiled at the thought that a Cossack should dare to pick a quarrel with him so boldly. He judged also that as it had already begun it would not soon come to an end, but Skshetuski was a man tough as steel, full of confidence in himself, a man who gave way to nothing or to no one, who sought danger almost eagerly. He would have preferred to have pursued Bohun at once, but he continued to ride beside the princess. Moreover the carriages had already passed the ravine, and in the distance could be seen the lights of Rozloga.

CHAPTER IV.

The family of Kurtsevich-Bulyhov was of an old princely stock which bore the coat-of-arms of Kurch; it claimed to come from Koryat, but it was said that it really originated in Ruryk. Of the two principal lines of descent one belonged in Lithuania, the other in Volhynia. Prince Vasil of the numerous descendants of the Volhynian line, had settled in the country beyond the Dnieper. Because he was poor and did not wish to remain in the neighborhood of his rich relations, he enlisted in the service of Prince Michael Vishnyovyetski, the father of the celebrated Yeremy.

He had covered himself with glory and had done the Prince knightly service. As a reward he was given Red (Krasne)-Rozloga, which later on account of the enormous number of wolves who congregated there, was called Wolf's-Rozloga, and here he settled permanently. In the year 1629 he entered the Romish church, and married Panna Rahozia, the daughter of a noble house that took its origin in Wallachia. From this union a year later a daughter, Helena, was born to the young couple, but the mother died at her birth. Prince Vasil gave no thought to a second marriage, but devoted himself entirely to cultivating his land and to the education of his only daughter. He was a man of a noble character and unusual virtue. Having accumulated in a short time a moderate fortune, he thought of his elder brother, Constantine, who had remained behind in Volhynia in poverty, forsaken by his rich relations and obliged to go into service on various estates. He invited him to Rozloga with his wife and his five sons and shared with them all he had. The two Kurtseviches lived in peace until the end of the year 1634, when Vasil went to Smolensk with King Vladislav. There occurred the misfortune that preceded his ruin. In the King's camp a letter was intercepted which had been written to Shehin. It was signed with the name of the prince and sealed with the coat of arms of Kurch. Such evident proof of treachery on the part of the knight who had hitherto enjoyed an untainted

reputation struck every one with astonishment and horror. In vain did Vasil call God to witness that neither the letter nor the signature of the letter was his,—the coat of arms on the seal banished every doubt, and no one would believe in the loss of his seal by which the prince sought to clear himself, and so the unfortunate prince who was attainted for the crime of *pro crimine perduelionis* was forced to save himself by flight. He arrived by night at Rozloga, made his brother Constantine swear by all the saints that he would take care of his daughter as her own father—and disappeared forever. It was said, he had once written a letter to Prince Yeremy from Bar with the request that he would not deprive his daughter Helena of the last morsel of bread, and would allow her to remain quietly in Rozloga in the care of Constantine—then he completely vanished. Reports were spread immediately that he had died; it was also said that he had gone over to the emperor and had fallen in war in Germany; but who could tell for certain anything about him? He must have perished for no further inquiries came from him about his daughter. All mention of him ceased and he was only remembered once more when his innocence was established. A certain Kuptsevich from Vitebsk confessed on his dying bed that he had written the letter to Shehin and had sealed it with the seal that he had found in the camp. At this testimony all hearts were filled with sorrow and regret. The sentence was annulled, the name of Prince Vasil was reinstated with honor, but for him, consolation for his wrongs came too late. As far as Rozloga was concerned it had never occurred to Prince Yeremy to take it from him, for the Vishnyovyetskis who knew Vasil better than most people had never been quite convinced of his guilt. He might even have remained, and under their mighty protection, might have mocked at the sentence. When he went away it was simply because he could not endure the disgrace.

Thus Helena had grown up peacefully at Rozloga under the sheltering care of her uncle. It was not until his death that life became hard for her. Constantine's wife, who had come from a family of doubtful origin, was a rough, passionate, energetic woman, whom her husband alone had been able to restrain. After his death, she had taken the management of Rozloga into her iron hands. The servants trembled before her; the household avoided her like fire, and she even made her presence unpleasantly felt in the neighborhood. In

the third year of her rule, twice did she invade the Sivinsks at Brovark with warlike intent; she herself dressed in man's clothing, and led her servants and Cossacks on horseback. Once after one of Prince Yeremy's regiments had scattered a band of Tartars who had been committing depredations in Siedm Mogil, the princess at the head of her people cut down to the last man all that remained after they had fled to Rozloga. She had planted herself in Rozloga for good and began to regard it as her own and her sons' property. She loved her sons as the wolf loves her young, but as she herself was boorish it did not occur to her to give them a decent bringing up. A monk of the Greek church whom she had brought from Kiev taught them to read and write—that was all their instruction; and yet Lubni was close by, and the court of the prince, at which the young princes might have learned courtly manners, have obtained experience in government affairs; have undertaken some kind of business, or if they wished to go into military service, might have acquired military knowledge. The old princess, however, had her reasons for not going to Lubni.

How easy it would be for Prince Yeremy to remember to whom Rozloga really belonged, how easily might he inquire into her guardianship of Helena, or even, in memory of Vasil, undertake the guardianship himself! In that case she would have been obliged to leave Rozloga. She preferred therefore that everyone in Lubni should forget her, and that there were Kurtsevichis in the world; so for this reason the young princes were brought up like half savages and more like Cossacks than noblemen. When they were still lads they took part in the disputes of the old princess in the warlike excursions against the Sivinskis and the Tartar hordes. They themselves had a natural dislike to books and writing, and would rather shoot the whole day with their bows, or practice exercising with spears or swords, or in casting with slings. They took not the slightest interest in the management of the lands, for the mother would not let it go out of her own hands. It was really sad to see these descendants of a renowned race, in whose veins ran princely blood, but whose manners were rough and indelicate, and whose tastes and hard hearts recalled the wild steppes. They grew up meanwhile like young oaks, but as they themselves knew that they were uncultivated men, they were ashamed to mix with the nobility; and thus, they preferred the comradeship of the

wild Cossack bands. They early came into relations with Nij, where they were looked upon as comrades; sometimes they spent a whole six months in Sich; they went on "business" with the Cossacks, took part in their expeditions against the Turks and the Tartars, and these finally became their principal and favorite occupations. The mother was not displeased with this for they often brought home rich booty. On one of these expeditions the eldest, Vasil, fell into the hands of the Infidels; his brothers freed him with the assistance of Bohun and his Zaporojians, but not before his eyes had been put out. From that time on, he was obliged to sit at home, and though he had formerly been the wildest of all, he was now very gentle, and became absorbed in religious meditation and reflection. The younger sons carried on their warlike enterprises until they finally received the nickname of the Cossack Princes. Indeed it was only necessary to cast a glance at Rozloga Siromakh in order to guess what kind of people occupied it. As the ambassador and Skshetuski passed through the gates they did not see a gentleman's castle, but a roomy barrack constructed of enormous beams of oak with narrow windows like loopholes. The servants' quarters and those of the Cossacks, the stables, the granaries, and the store-houses joined on to the dwelling-house and formed an irregular building consisting of higher and lower portions, outwardly so mean and poor-looking that if one had not perceived light through the windows, one would hardly have believed it to be a human habitation. In the court yard before the house were two wells with cranes, and the gate-post had a ring at the top of it to which was chained a tame bear. A massive gate also made of oak-beams, formed the entrance to the court yard, which was entirely surrounded by a moat and palisade.

It was evidently a fortified place, protected against incursions and attacks. It reminded one in all particulars of the border forts of the Cossacks, and although the greater number of the mansions of the nobility in the border-lands had very much the same outward appearance, one felt here, more than elsewhere, that this was a robber's den. The servants who came to meet the guests with lighted torches looked more like robbers than domestic servants. The huge dogs in the yard dragged at their chains as if they would break loose and jump on the newcomers. The sound of neighing horses was heard from the stable. The young Bulyhovs in concert

with their mother, began to scold the servants, to give orders, and to swear. In the midst of this confusion the guests stepped into the house. Rozvan-Ursu who had already seen the savagery and the miserable condition of the houses felt almost regret to think that he had consented to stay over night at this place. But he was fairly dazed at the sight that met his eyes. The interior of the house did not fulfil the promise of the miserable outward appearance. One stepped first into a roomy vestibule, whose walls were almost entirely covered with shields and skins of wild animals.

In two enormous fireplaces, huge logs of wood were burning, and by their bright light one saw rows of shining armor, Turkish shields in which here and there were precious stones, shirts of chain-armor with gold buttons at the fastenings, cuirasses, breast-plates, gorgets, steel-armor of great value, Polish and Turkish helmets, and visors overlaid with silver. On the opposite wall hung shields of a kind no longer used; beside them Polish lances and oriental spears; broadswords innumerable, from simple swords to scimitars and yatagans which, with their gay colored hilts sparkled in the firelight like stars. In the corners hung rolls of fox, wolf, bear, marten, and ermine skins, the prizes of the chase of the young princes. Lower down along the wall slept in their hoops hawks, falcons, and huge vultures, which brought from the farther eastern steppes, were used in wolf-hunting.

From this room the guests went into a large hall; here also a bright fire burned on the hearth, above which was a mantelpiece. In this room still greater magnificence was displayed than in the vestibule. The bare wood of the walls was hung with Turkish draperies; upon the floor were spread valuable Oriental rugs. In the middle of the room stood a long table on crossed legs. This was made of rough planks, but upon it stood cups entirely gilt, and of Venetian cut glass. Alongside the walls were smaller tables, chests of drawers and closets, and upon these stood chests and cases packed full of bronzes, brass candlesticks, and clocks, which in their time, the Turks had stolen from the Venetians, and the Cossacks again from the Turks. The whole room was packed with a quantity of beautiful objects that, as far as one could see, could be but little appreciated by the hostess. Everywhere this luxury was mingled with the greatest simplicity such as belongs to the steppes. The costly Turkish cabinets, ebony, and mother-of-pearl stood beside rough, unpolished cup-

boards; simple wooden chairs were placed beside luxurious sofas covered with rugs. The cushions which, in Oriental fashion, lay upon the sofas, were covered with gold embroidery, and silk, but were seldom filled with feathers, but more frequently with hay or pea-shucks. The costly draperies and the gorgeous articles constituted so-called "Turkish and Tartar goods" which had been bought in part from the Cossacks, in many wars in the time of old Prince Vasil, and in part had been brought home as booty from the expeditions against the Nijovs, by the young Bulyhovs, who preferred to make expedition to the Black Sea in boats, to bringing a wife home or looking after the affairs of the estate.

All this did not surprise Skshetuski. He knew the homes in the border lands; but the Wallachian Boyar was surprised to see that in the midst of all this splendor the Kurtsevichis walked about in calf-skin boots and in sheep-skin coats that were not much better than those worn by the servants. But Longin Podbipyenta who had been accustomed to other kinds of establishments in Lithuania was also surprised.

The young princes meanwhile, received the guests kindly, and with the greatest empressment, but they did it in such a clumsy manner, owing to their want of polish, that the lieutenant could hardly keep from laughing.

The eldest, Simeon, said:

"Be welcome! We thank you for your kindness. Look upon our house as your home. Make yourselves at home. We greet you humbly on our threshold of the Nij."

And although in the tones of his voice, no humility was expressed, or even a pretence of it as though he were receiving superiors, yet he bowed himself Cossack-fashion to the girdle, and his younger brothers followed his example believing that hospitality demanded it, and said:

"At your service, worthy sirs, at your service."

Meanwhile the princess had pulled Bohun by the sleeve and led him out of the room.

"Listen, Bohun," she said hastily, "I have not long to talk to you; I saw that you showed your teeth at that young nobleman and are seeking a quarrel with him."

"Mother," answered the Cossack, kissing the old lady's hand, "the world is wide, let him go his way, I will go mine. I never knew him, never heard him before, but let him keep away from the princess, or, as true as I live, I will flash my sword in his eyes."

"Why you are crazy, crazy! Where is your head, little Cossack? What is the matter with you? Do you want to ruin us and yourself? He is one of Vishnyovyetski's soldiers, a lieutenant, a man of standing, for he was sent by the prince as an ambassador to the Khan. If a hair of his head is injured under our roof, do you know what will happen? The Voyevoda will then turn his eyes upon Rozloga, will avenge him, will hunt us all to the four winds, and will take Helena to Lubni—and what then? Do you want to have a quarrel with him too? Do you want to attack Lubni? Try it, if you wish to be impaled, little spoilt Cossack! . . . . If the nobleman likes the girl or not, he will depart as he has come, and that is the end of it. Calm yourself and, if you will not do so, see to it that you get out of here to whence you came or you will bring misfortune upon us!"

The Cossack bit his moustache and groaned; but he understood that the princess was right.

"They are going away to-morrow, mother," he said, "and I will calm myself, but do not let my black-eyed girl talk to him."

"What's the matter with you? Do you want them to think that I'm keeping her a prisoner? She will entertain them, I wish it. You can not rule here in the house, you are not the master!"

"Do not be angry, princess; if it cannot be otherwise, I will show them a face as sweet as Turkish dainties. I will gnash my teeth, but I will not grasp my sword even if I should be torn with anger, and if my soul should dissolve with a thousand sighs, let your will be done."

"That's right, well said, falcon. Take your theorbo, play, sing, and you will feel better in your mind, and now go to the guests."

They returned to the reception room where the young princes, not knowing how to entertain their guests, were continually bidding them welcome and bending low before them. As they approached Skshetuski looked sternly and proudly into Bohun's eyes, but he found in them no provocation nor challenge. The face of the young Cossack chief beamed with polite gayety, and he dissimulated so well that the most practiced eye might have been deceived. The lieutenant looked at him sharply for in the darkness he had not been able to distinguish his features. Now he saw a straight figure, slender as a poplar, with mobile features, a luxuriant black moustache

that hung down in two ends; gayety shone on his face through the Ukrainian melancholy like the sun through a mist. Upon his high forehead fell a shock of black hair, like a little mane, several strands of which were plaited and hung down like a row of teeth over the strong eyebrows. The aquiline nose, the broad nostrils and the white teeth which showed at every smile, gave his face something the expression of a bird of prey; but taken altogether he was a type of the dashing, defiant beauty of the Ukraine. His gorgeous attire especially, distinguished this horseman of the steppes from the princes who were clad in skins. Bohun wore a silver-brocaded coat and a red waist-coat. That was the color which all the Cossacks of Pereyaslav wore. Around his waist was a crape girdle from which a richly mounted sword hung by silver cords. But the sword itself as well as his apparel were eclipsed by the richness of the Turkish scimitar which he wore at his girdle, the handle of which was so thickly set with gems that it fairly sparkled. In this costume he could easily have been mistaken for a lord of high birth, not for a Cossack, and the more so as his easy and courtly manners gave no hint of his low origin. He stepped up to Longin, listened to his story of his ancestor, and of the killing of the three crusaders. Then he turned to the lieutenant and, as if nothing had happened between them, asked with perfect freedom:

"You've returned from the Crimea, I hear?"

"From the Crimea!" answered the lieutenant dryly.

"I have also been there, and if I did not get as far as Bakch-Serai, I hope to go there some day, if those joyful reports are true."

"What reports do you mean?"

"They say, that if our gracious King should begin war with the Turks, Vishnyovyetski will devastate the Crimea with fire and sword, and these reports have spread great joy over the whole Ukraine and Nij, for unless we fight in Bakhch Serai under such a leader, we shall fight under no one."

"Oh, we will revel as true of God is in Heaven," answered the Kurtsevich.

The lieutenant was astonished at the respect with which the Cossack spoke of the prince. He smiled therefore and said in a somewhat gentler tone:

"I see that the expeditions against the Nijovs that have covered you with fame, still do not satisfy you."

"A little war, little fame, great war, great fame. Konaschevitz did not kill Sohaydatz on the boats but at Khotsim."

At that moment the door opened and Vasil, the eldest Kurtsevich walked slowly into the room, Helena leading him by the hand. He was a man of middle age, pale and thin, with a sad, ascetic expression that reminded one of the pictures of Byzantine saints. His long hair which from sorrow and suffering had grown gray, fell down upon his shoulders and, in place of eyes, were two red hollows. In his hand he held a brass crucifix with which he blessed the room and all present.

"In the name of God, the Father, in the name of the Redeemer, and of the Holy Virgin," said he, "if you are apostles and bring good news, welcome to this Christian threshold, Amen!"

"Pardon him, worthy sirs," murmured the young princes, "he has lost his mind."

Vasil, however, continued his blessing and said:

"As it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, 'those who shed their blood for the faith will be saved, but those who seek for earthly possesssions, for prizes or booty, shall be damned.' Let us pray!" "Woe unto you brothers, woe unto me, for we have made war for the sake of spoil, God be merciful to us, poor sinners, God be merciful—and you men come here from afar, what news do you bring? Are you aspostles?"

He was silent and appeared to wait an answer. The lieutenant answered, therefore, after a pause:

"We are very far removed from such a high position; we are only soldiers, and are ready to die for the faith."

"Then you will be saved," answered the blind man, "but for us the hour of redemption is not yet at hand. Woe unto you, brothers, woe unto me!"

The last words he spoke almost groaning, and upon his face was pictured such boundless despair that the guests did not know what to do. Helena had meanwhile seated him on a chair, and she herrself hastened into the hall and returned in a few minutes with a lute in her hand. Soft tones filled the air and to the sound of the lute, the maiden sang a hymn.

To thee, O, Lord, in heaven's height,
I raise my prayer by day and dight,
O pity take, Have mercy on a sinner's woe,
And dry mine eyes, tho' salt tears flow!

The blind man leaned his head back and listened to the

words of the song which appeared to soothe him like a healing balm. Then by degrees the traces of sorrow and despair disappeared from his features; finally his head sank upon his breast and he remained thus, as if in a half sleep or stupor.

"Do not interrupt the music, for that will quiet him entirely," said the princess gently. "You see his mental peculiarity consists in this; that he is always expecting the apostles and as soon as anyone comes into the house, he goes to meet them and asks them if they are not the apostles."

Helena sang meanwhile:

"Guide, O, Gracious God, my Path!
Like a Wanderer in the Wild.
Like a ship upon strange seas
I am lost and alone."

Her sweet voice became stronger and, with the lute in her hand, her eyes raised to heaven, she was so enchantingly beautiful that the lieutenant could not take his eyes off her. He continued to gaze upon her and for some moments forgot everything else.

He was aroused from his enchantment by the words of the old princess.

"That will do! He won't wake soon; and now I invite the gentlemen to supper."

"We invite you to bread and salt," said the young Bulyhovs.

Pan Rosvan, as a polished cavalier, offered his arm to the old princess. When Skshetuski saw this, he went to Panna Helena. His heart became soft as wax, when he felt her hand upon his arm and his eyes sparkled as he said:

"The angels in heaven do not sing more sweetly than you do."

"Thou sinnest. O knight, comparing my voice to that of the angels," answered Helena.

"I do not know if it is a sin, but I know I would willingly let my eyes be put out if I could listen to thy singing until my death. But what am I saying! If I were blind I could not see thee, and that would be a torment unbearable."

"Oh, do not say that, Sir. To-morrow thou wilt go from here and thou wilt forget me."

"Oh, that could not be, for I have learned to love thee so well that in my whole life, I will never love anyone else; I will never forget thee."

The cheeks of the young girl flushed scarlet; her breast

heaved strongly; she wished to reply but her lips only trembled.

Skshetuski therefore continued:

"You, thou wilt forget me beside that handsome Cossack who will accompany thy song on the balabayka."

"Never, never," whispered the maiden, "but beware of him, for he is a terrible man."

"What do I care for one Cossack! If the whole of Sich were at his back I would dare all for thee! To me thou art a priceless jewel; thou art my world! Oh, if I only knew that I were loved in return."

A soft "Yes!" sounded like the music of paradise in Skshetuski's ears and it seemed to him as if ten hearts were beating in his breast. Everything grew bright before his eyes as if sunbeams had fallen upon the earth. He felt an unusual strength as if wings had grown on him. During the supper, Bohun's glance repeatedly sought him and his face was changed and very pale. But the lieutenant, who possessed Helena's love, did not trouble himself about his rival. "Let him go to the devil," he thought to himself. "If he comes across my path, I will crush him," and then his thoughts turned to another direction.

He felt that Helena sat so near him that his arm almost touched hers; he saw the blush that would not fade from her face and which seemed to give forth heat; he saw her breast heaving like waves and her eyes that were now cast to the ground and shaded by the lashes; then again raised and beaming like two stars. For Helena, although suppressed by the princess, although living as an orphan, in sorrow and care, was a Ukraine maiden with fiery blood in her veins. As she now felt the first warm rays of love, she bloomed out like a rose and awoke to a new, hitherto unknown life. In her features shone happiness and courage which struggled with maidenly modesty and painted upon her cheeks those beautiful rosy colors. Skshetuski could hardly contain himself for joy. He drank to excess, but the mead could not hurt him for he was already intoxicated with love. He no longer saw anyone at the table besides his Love; he did not notice that Bohun was growing very pale; that he clutched the handle of his scimitar more and more convulsively; he did not hear how Longin, for the third time, related the history of his ancestor, and how the Kurtsevich told of their expeditions after Turkish property.

All of them except Bohun drank deeply and the chief example was given by the old princess who raised her glass to drink now to the health of her guests, now to the health of the gracious prince, then to the health of Hospodar Lupnic. They talked a good deal about the blind Vasil; of his knightly deeds in the olden time; of his misfortunes and of his present mental condition, which the eldest Simeon explained thus: "Think of it, gentlemen, if the smallest splinter in your eye would prevent you seeing, how much more would a considerable piece of pitch getting into his brain make him crazy."

"It is a very delicate organ," remarked Pan Longin.

Suddenly the old princess noticed Bohun's face.

"What ails you, falcon?"

"I have a pain at my heart, mother," he said gloomily, "but the word of a Cossack is not spoken to the winds; I will bear it."

"Bear it, my son! be enduring!"

The supper was over—but they continued pouring fresh mead into the cups. Some Cossack boys entered the rooms, whom they had invited to dance in order to amuse the guests. The sounds of balabaykas and of drums were heard and the sleepy boys were obliged to dance. Then the young Bulyhovs began to turn about. The old princess placed her hands akimbo and stepping upon the floor began to stamp and posture and sing and when Skshetusky saw this, he ventured a dance with Helena. As he placed his arm round her, he felt as if he was clasping a portion of Heaven to his breast. As they whirled round in the dance, her long braids flew about his neck as if she would tie him to her forever. He could not resist the temptation and, when he thought no one was looking, he bent down and kissed her sweet mouth with fervor.

Late at night, when he was alone with Longin in a room, where they had prepared two beds, instead of going to sleep, he sat upon t' e edge of his bed, and said:

"You will ride to Lubni with another man to-morrow."

Podbipyenta, who had just ended his paters, opened his eyes wide, and asked:

"How is that? Are you going to stay here."

"Not I, but my heart remains here and only the sweet memory will go with me. You will see a great change in me; for from longing I can hardly draw breath."

"So you have fallen in love with the young princess."

"So it is, as sure as I am alive here before you. Sleep flees my eyelids, and I would like to sigh unceasingly and to dissolve in steam entirely. I tell you this because you have a sensitive and loving heart and so will understand my torment."

Pan Longin began himself to sigh as a token that he understood the torments of love. After a while, he asked in a plaintive tone.

"Perhaps you have made a vow of chastity?"

"Your question is not sensible, for if we all took such vows the human race would die out."

The entrance of a servant interrupted the conversation. He was an old Tartar with piercing black eyes and a face that was as wrinkled as a dried apple. As he entered, he cast a meaning look at Skshetuski and asked:

"Do the gentlemen need anything further? Perhaps a glass of mead for a pillow!"

"We need nothing."

The Tartar approached Skshetuski and whispered:

"I have a word for you from the young lady."

"Then be my Pandar," cried the lieutenant joyfully. "You may speak in the presence of this gentleman for I have confided my secret to him."

The Tartar drew a piece of ribbon from his sleeve.

"The young lady sends the honored gentleman this scarf and says that she loves him with her whole soul."

The lieutenant seized the scarf and began to kiss it in his enchantment and to press it to his breast and, as he got a little calmer, he asked:

"What did she tell you to say?"

"That she loves you, honored sir, with all her soul."

"Here, take this dollar as a present. She says then that she loves me?"

"It is so!"

"Here is another dollar for you. May God bless her for I love her best of all. Tell her—or wait—I will write to her myself. Bring me ink, pen, and paper."

"What?" asked the Tartar.

"Ink, pen and paper."

"There isn't such a thing in the house. In the time of Prince Vasil there was some—and then—when the young princess learned to write from the monk,—but that is a long time ago."

Skshetuski snapped his fingers. "Pan Podbipyenta, have you not pen and ink?"

The Lithuanian shrugged his shoulders and looked up into the sky.

"The devil," said Skshetuski, "then I am in a fix."

The Tartar had meanwhile crouched before the fire.

"What is the use of writing," he said, as he raked the coals, "the young lady has gone to sleep and what your Highness wishes to write to her you can say to-morrow."

"If that's so, it's another matter, you are, I see a faithful servant to the young lady. There's a third dollar for you. How long have you been in her service?"

"Alas, it is fourteen years since Count Vasil took me prisoner. From that time I have served him faithfully, and when he went away into banishment he left his child with Constantine, but he said to me, 'Chekhly you will not leave my girl, will you, but will take care of her as the eye in your head.' La Allah illa Allah!"

"And you have done so?"

"I have done it and will continue to do it."

"See here, how do matters appear to you; how is the young lady treated here?"

"They do not treat her very well; they wish to give her to Bohun, and he is an infernal hound."

"Nothing will come of it, someone will be found who will take her away."

"Yes," said the old man, as he stirred the glowing ashes, "they want to give her to Bohun, but he may take and carry her away as the wolf does the lamb and leave them in possession of Rozloga—for Rozloga belongs to her, not to them —to the Prince Vasil. Bohun will also willingly do that, for he has in his hiding-places more gold and silver than there is sand in Rozloga. But she hates him since the day, when, in her presence, he beat a man's brains out with his pole axe. Blood fell between them and hatred grew out of it. La Allah!"

The lieutenant could not close his eyes the whole night long. He walked up and down the room, gazed at the moon, and made several resolutions. Now he understood the Bulyhov's game. If a nobleman from the vicinity should marry the young princess he would demand Rozloga as her fortune and would have a right to it for it belonged to her. Perhaps he would demand an account of their guardianship.

That was why the Bulyhovs who had grown up entirely in a Cossack country had resolved to give the girl to a Cossack. When Skshetuski thought of this, he clenched his fist and felt for the sword at his side. He determined also to crush this intrigue and felt the power in him to do it. In the first place Prince Yeremy ought to be the guardian of Helena because Rozloga was a gift from the Vishnyovyetski to the old Vasil and secondly because Vasil himself had written from Bar to the Prince begging him to be her guardian. Only the urgency of public business, of war, and great undertakings had prevented the voyevoda from interesting himself in the guardianship. But, it would be sufficient to remind him by a word, in order that justice might be done. Dawn was already gray when Pan Skshetuski threw himself upon his bed. He slept soundly and awoke in the morning with a firm resolve. They dressed themselves quickly, he and Longin for the carriage was already waiting for them, and Skshetuski's soldiers were already mounted and ready for the march. In the reception room the ambassador in company with the old princess and her sons was strengthening himself with a little soup, but Bohun was not there; no one knew whether he still slept or had gone away.

After he had refreshed himself, Skshetuski said,

"Lady, time flies; we must soon mount our horses; before we express our gratitude to you for your hospitality, there is an important matter about which I would like to say a word to you and to your sons in private."

In the features of the princess lively astonishment was depicted; she looked first at her sons, then at the ambassador and Pan Longin as if she would read from their faces what it was all about and with a certain uneasiness in her voice, she said:

"I am at your service, Sir."

The ambassador wanted to retire, but she would not hear of it. Instead of that, she led the way into the vestibule with its hangings and armor. The young princes rose and followed their mother and after them came Skshetuski. She went up to him and asked:

"What do you wish to talk to me about?"

The lieutenant fixed an almost stern look upon her and said:

"Pardon me, gracious lady, and you, young princes, that, contrary to custom and good manners, I have undertaken

to put this matter before you instead of intrusting it to a confidential messenger, but it cannot be done otherwise and, as no one can fight against fate, I will set before you without further delay my humble prayer that you as her guardians will give me the Princess Helena as my wife."

If at this moment, in the middle of winter, a stroke of lightning had struck the courtyard in Rozloga it would not have produced such an effect upon the princess and her sons as these words of the lieutenant. For a time, they looked in astonishment at the speaker who stood before them, erect as a statue, calm and proud, as if he had no intention of begging, but rather of commanding; but they could find no words to reply. Instead the princess began to ask

"What! she—Helena?"

"Yes, gracious Princess, and that is my unalterable intention."

A short silence followed.

"I am awaiting your answer, Princess."

"Pardon me, worthy sir," answered the princess, after she had calmed down a little, but her voice was dry and harsh. "It is no slight honor for us to receive this request from such a cavalier, but nothing can come of it, for I've already promised Helena to another."

"Consider, gracious Princess, as a careful guardian, if that is not against the wish of the young lady, and if I am not better than he to whom you have promised her."

"Good sir, who is best, is for me to judge; you may be the best; that makes no difference to us, we do not know you."

The lieutenant stood more proudly erect and his glances were like sharp knives and cold as steel,

"But I know you, you traitors," he thundered, "you want to give a relation of yours to a peasant, only in order that he may leave you in unlawful possession."

"You yourself are a traitor," cried the princess, "is that how you thank us for our hospitality, is that the gratitude that dwells in your heart. O viper, who are you, whence do you come?"

The young Kurtseviches began to snap their fingers and glance at the weapons on the walls.

The lieutenant, however cried out,

"You heathens, you have stolen the property of an orphan, but it will bring you no blessing; only one day more and the prince will hear of it."

At these words, the princess darted into the back of the room, seized a javelin and made for the lieutenant. The young princes also seized whatever they could lay hold of, one a sword, another a spear, or knife, surrounded the lieutenant in a semicircle and sniffed like a pack of raging wolves.

"You will go and tell the prince?" screamed the princess. "How do you know you will get away from here alive? How do you know this is not your last hour?"

Skshetuski crossed his hands upon his breast and did not move an eyelash.

"As the envoy of the prince, I am on my way back from the Crimea. If one drop of my blood is spilt here, within three days this house will be in ashes; and you will all rot in the dungeons at Lubni. Is there a power in the world that can protect you? Do not threaten for I do not fear you!"

"We shall perish, but you will perish first."

"Well, strike, here's my breast!"

The young princes with their mother at their head, held their weapons pointed towards the lieutenant's breast, but it seemed as if invisible chains held their hands in bonds. Breathing heavily and grinding their teeth, they rose in impotent rage, but not one of them dared to strike. The dreaded name of Vishnyovyetski had made them powerless. The lieutenant was master of the situation.

The helpless anger of the princess exhausted herself in a torrent of abuse.

"Braggart! miserable vagabond! good-for-nothing! princely blood do you wish? nothing will come of it, we will give her to any one, but not to you, and the prince himself cannot oblige us to do so."

Skshetuski answered: "This is not the time for me to prove my nobility to you, but I believe that your family would be glad to bear sword and shield after me. Besides if the peasant is good enough for you, I am better; as for my property, it can well be compared with yours, and if you say that you will not give Helena to me, hear what I have to say. I would also let you remain in Rozloga and would demand no account of your guardianship."

"Do not give away what is not yours."

"I am not giving anything, I am only giving my promise for the future and confirm it with the word of a knight.

Choose therefore; either you will give an account to the prince and leave Rozloga, or you will give me the girl and retain the property . . . "

The javelin slowly slipped from the hands of the princess and fell noisily to the ground.

"Choose," repeated Skshetuski, "either peace or war."

"It is lucky," said Princess Kurtsevich, already in a milder tone, "that Bohun has ridden out with the falcon and does not see you, for he suspected you already yesterday. If he were here it would not end without bloodshed."

"And I do not carry my sword only that it may weigh down my belt."

"Consider whether you think it polite for a cavalier who has come into a house in friendship to overpower people like this, and to carry off a girl by force, exactly as if she were a Turkish slave."

"I think it is very appropriate since she is to be sold against her will to a peasant."

"Do not speak so of Bohun; for even though he does not know his parentage he is still a famous warrior and a brave knight, and we have known him from childhood and consider him as one of our own blood. To rob him of the girl or to stab him to death would be about the same thing to him."

"Gracious Princess, time presses; I must go on my journey. Pardon me if I repeat once more: Make your choice."

The countess turned to her sons:

"What do you say, my sons, to the humble request of this cavalier?

The Bulyhovs looked at one another and nudged each other but were silent.

Finally Simeon growled:

'If you bid us fight, mother, we will fight; if you bid us give him the girl, we will give her to him."

"To fight is bad and to give is bad."

She then turned to Skshetuski:

"You have driven us so to the wall that we can hardly breathe. Bohun is a mad fellow who dares anything. Who will defend us from his vengeance? He himself will be ruined through the prince, but before that occurs he will destroy us. What shall we do?"

"That is for you to decide."

The princess was silent for a moment.

"Listen, worthy cavalier, absolute secrecy must be pre-

served. We will send Bohun to Pereyaslav and we ourselves will drive to Lubni with Helena. You will entreat the prince to send a guard to Rozloga. Bohun has in the vicinity one hundred and fifty men, some of whom are here. One could not easily take Helena away, for he would try to get her back alive or dead. It cannot be otherwise. Go therefore. Betray our secret to no one and expect us."

"In order that you may betray me?"

"We would if that were only possible! But we cannot do so as you see yourself. Give us your word that you will preserve our secret till that time."

"I give my word—do you give me the girl?"

"We cannot do otherwise—even if Bohun should injure us."

"Tut, tut! gentlemen," said the lieutenant suddenly, turning to the young princes, "here are four of you, like oaks, and you fear one Cossack and want to destroy him through treachery! Although I thank you, I must say that this is not worthy of honorable noblemen."

"Do not mix yourself up in this affair," cried the princess. "This is not your business. What shall we do? How many soldiers have you to pit against one hundred and fifty men? Would you protect Helena when he comes to take her away by force? That is not your business. You go to Lubni, and whatever we do, let us alone, if we only bring Helena to you."

"Do as you will, but one thing I must say, if any evil happens to the girl—then woe to you!"

"Do not talk thus and drive us to desperation."

"Yes, you did wish to use force and even now when you are trying to sell her in exchange for Rozloga, it does not occur to you to ask her if she is favorably disposed towards my person."

"We will do so in your presence," said the old princess, suppressing the anger which began to rise anew in her breast, for she discerned perfectly the contempt that expressed itself in the words of the lieutenant.

Simeon went to fetch Helena, and in a few moments appeared with her in the hall.

Amid the ebullitions of rage and the threatenings which appeared still to rumble in the air like the echo of a passing storm; in the midst of those knitted brows, fierce looks, and unfriendly faces, her beautiful countenance beamed like the sun after a storm.

"Young lady!" said the princess sullenly, pointing to Skshetuski, "if you have no objection there is your future husband."

Helena grew pale as the wall. She screamed and covered her eyes with her hands. Then she suddenly stretched out her hands to Skshetuski and whispered rapturously:

"Is it true?"

An hour later the ambassador's train and that of the lieutenant were slowly wending their way along the forest highway in the direction of Lubni. Skshetuski and Longin rode at the head of the cavalcade. Behind them came the long file of carriages belonging to the ambassador. The lieutenant was absorbed in thought, when, suddenly, there came to his ears snatches of the song:

"Alas! Alas! how sore my heart."

In the depth of the forest, on a narrow footpath, Bohun appeared. His horse was completely covered with dust and mud. The Cossack had evidently, as was his custom been wandering about on the steppes, and in the forest, in order to breathe in the air, to forget the world and the sorrow that gnawed at his heart—to numb his pain.

He was now just on his way to Rozloga.

When Skshetuski saw the splendid knightly figure, that appeared and vanished, he could not help murmuring to himself,

"What a fortunate thing it was that he clove a man's skull in her presence."

Suddenly he had a feeling of compunction. It seemed to him as if he felt sorry for Bohun, more particularly, because he was bound by his word to the princess and could not immediately—on the spot—ride after him and say:

"We both love the same girl! One of us is superfluous in the world. Unsheath Cossack, villain!"

CHAPTER V.

Skshetuski did not find the prince at home when he reached Lubni. He had gone to attend a christening at the house of one of his old retainers, Pan Suffchynski at Siench, and with him went the princess, the two princesses Zbaraska, and many people of the Court. Word was sent to Siench of the return of the lieutenant from the Crimea, and also of the arrival of the ambassador.

Meantime Skshetuski was received with joy by his friends after his long journey, and especially by Volodiyovski who, since his last duel with the lieutenant, had become his warmest friend. This knight was distinguished for one peculiarity; that he was always in love. After he had become convinced of Anusia Borzobahata's faithlessness, he had turned his sensitive heart over to Angelica Lenzka, also a lady in waiting, and when she a month ago, married Stanishevski, Pan Michael began to comfort himself by paying attentions to the elder Princess Zbaraska, Anna, the niece of Prince Vishnyovyetski.

He knew very well that he lifted his eyes too high and that he could not flatter himself with the smallelst hope, especially as several suitors had pretended to the hand of the princess; among them Bodzynski, and Lassota who, in the name of Pan Pshiyemski and of the Voyevoda of Lench were suing for her hand.

The unlucky Pan Michael related his new sorrow to the lieutenant and initiated him into all the occurrences and secrets of the court. Skshetuski, however, listened with divided attention; for his mind and his heart were occupied with other matters. If that restlessness of the soul which is inseparable from love, even the happiest love, had not tortured him, Skshetuski would have felt happy after such a long absence on returning to Lubni; for here he was surrounded with friendly faces and the noises of military life which was his favorite music. Now Lubni, although the fortified residence of the prince might be compared favor-

ably as regards magnificence with any of the courts of the petty kings. It was different from the others only in that a strict military discipline, as in camp, was observed. Anyone who did not understand the manners and regulations of the place might imagine, even if he came here in time of peace, that some kind of military expedition was in preparation. The soldiers here took precedence of the courtiers, steel above gold, the sound of the bugle above the sound of revels and enjoyment. Everywhere perfect order reigned, and remarkable discipline; everywhere officers swarmed, belonging to the different regiments: Cuirassiers, cavalry, heavy dragoons, Cossacks, Tartars, and Wallachs, among whom were not only representatives of the entire country of the Dnieper, but also volunteer recruits of the nobility from all parts of the Commonwealth. Whoever wished to educate himself in a truly knightly school, came to Lubni. Nobody was wanting there. Consequently, besides natives of Russia, there were a number of Masurs, Lithuanians, natives of Little Poland, and even Prussians. The foot soldiers and the artillery, the so-called "fiery people," consisted principally of picked Germans who had enlisted for high pay. The dragoons were principally natives. The Lithuanians had entered the Tartar regiments; the Poles chose by preference to enlist in the cuirassier regiments. The prince did not let the knighthood remain idle, consequently there was constant stir in the camp. Certain regiments went to relieve others at the posts and border garrisons; others came to the capital; whole days were taken up in mustering and drilling. At times, even when the Tartars were quiet, the prince would undertake distant military expeditions into the limitless steppes and deserts, in order to accustom the soldiers to the march, to go to places that had never yet been visited, and to carry the fame of his name in all directions. The previous autumn he had followed the left bank of the Dnieper as far as Kudak where Pan Grodzitski, who was Governor, received him like a sovereign; then he followed the Porog until he came to Chortitza and there upon the meadows of Kushkas he had caused to be erected an enormous pile of stones as a memorial, and also as a token that, as yet, no lord had travelled this road to such a distance.

Pan Boguslav Mashkievich, a good, though young soldier, and at the same time a man of learning, who described this journey, as also other expeditions of the prince, told Skshe-

tuski wonderful stories about it. Volodiyovski confirmed everything he said for he also had been on this expedition. They also had seen the rapids and wondered at them; especially at the dreadful Nyenasytsov which yearly, like the fabulous Scylla and Charybdis, swallowed up many human victims. They had then turned towards the East to the burnt up steppes, where the cavalry could make no progress on account of the stubs and the horses were obliged to have their feet wrapepd in leather. There were in that direction a quantity of otter, moles, gigantic snakes, ten yards long and as thick as a man's arm. Upon the way, to perpetuate the memory of the affair, they had carved the princely coat of arms on a solitary oak, and finally they arrived at such forsaken deserts that they couldn't find the slightest vestige of any human habitation.

"I thought," said the learned Pan Mashkievich, "that like Ulysses we would also at last arrive in Hades."

To which Pan Michael answered:

"The men of Zamoyski's squadron, who were in the van, swear that they saw the boundary where the terrestial orb ends."

The lieutenant thereupon related to his companions stories of the Crimea, where he had passed almost half a year, waiting for the Khan's answer; of the towns there which remain from the earliest times; of the Tartars; of their military prowess, and finally of the terror which took possession of them when they heard of the great military expedition against the Crimea in which all the military powers of the Commonwealth were to take part.

With such conversation they passed their evenings and awaited the return of the prince. The lieutenant introduced Longin Podbipyenta to his friends; his kindly disposition won all hearts, and his superhuman strength in sword exercises won him universal respect. He told one and all about his ancestor, and about the three decapitated knights, but he remained silent about his vow, for he did not wish to lay himself open to ridicule. A special friendship sprang up between himself and Pan Michael as they both had such soft hearts. Before many days had passed, they were taking long walks together upon the ramparts and sighing—one to the star that seemed so high above him that he could not reach it, that is, the Princess Anna—the other to the unknown from whom he was divided by the three heads of his vow.

Volodiyovski tried to persuade Longin to enter the dragoons; the Lithuanian however remained firm in his decision to enter the Cuirassiers, in order to serve under Skshetuski; for he had heard with delight in Lubni that he was considered by all a knight without blemish, and one of the prince's best officers. And just now a vacancy had occured in Lieutenant Skshetuski's regiment as Pan Zakshevski, nicknamed "Miserere mei," had been dangerously and hopelessly ill for two weeks, in consequence of the damp weather which had caused all his wounds to open afresh. Added to the love-sorrows of the lieutenant was now the threatened loss of his old comrade and trusty friend. For hours he remained daily at his bed, comforting him as well as he could, and cheering him with the hope that they would yet make many an expedition together.

But the old soldier needed no comfort; he awaited death joyfully on his hard pallet that was covered with horses' hides. He looked at the crucifix that hung over his cot with an almost childlike smile; but to Skshetuski he said:

"Miserere mei! lieutenant, I am going to my heavenly rest. My body is so torn with holes that I fear that St. Peter who is God's steward and has to keep account of the order in Heaven will not let me into Paradise in such a tattered garment; but I will say to him, 'Holy little Peter, I conjure you by the ear of Malchus, do not disgrace me so; it was the heathen that put my bodily garment in such a condition . . . '

"Miserere mei, and should there be an expedition led by St. Michael against the powers of Hell, the old Zakshevski can yet be of some service. . . . "

The lieutenant, although as a soldier he had so often gazed into the eye of death and had even been the cause of death himself, could not keep back his tears when he heard the old man talking, as if his departure were no more than a bright sunset.

But one morning, the bells in all the churches of Lubni tolled to announce the death of Zakshevski. On this day, the prince arrived from Siench, and with him Pan Bodzinski and Pan Lassota and the whole court and a number of the nobility, in several dozen carriages; for the journey to Pan Suffchynski was a long one. The prince arranged a splendid funeral to honor the dead soldier, and to show how much he loved a true knight. Consequently all the regiments sta-

tioned in Lubni took part in the funeral procession. From the ramparts salutes were fired from cannon and smaller arms: the cavalry marched from the castle to the parish church of the town, in order of battle, but with crepe on their flags. The infantry followed with their muskets reversed. The prince himself took the lead in mourning apparel, riding behind the coffin which was borne in a gilded carriage drawn by eight milk-white horses, whose manes and tails had ben dyed red, and who bore a bunch of black ostrich plumes on their heads. In front of the hearse walked a division of janissaries, who were the body-guard of the prince, and immediately behind the hearse rode pages in Spanish dress, mounted on powerful horses, then came the high court officials, the unattachd courtiers, the household and finally the Haiduks and Pajuks (Turkish servants.) The mourning procession halted at the door of the church, where the priest Yaskolski greeted the coffin with a speech beginning with these words: "Whither hastenest thou, Zakshevski?" Then several of his comrades spoke in his praise, among them, Skshetuski, as his superior officer and friend. The coffin was then carried into the church and, the most eloquent orator of all, the Jesuit Mukhovietski, spoke with such fervor and impressive earnestness that the prince himself was moved to tears. He was indeed a man of exceedingly tender heart and a true father to his soldiers. He maintained a rigid discipline; but in point of generosity, kindly treatment of his men, and care for them, and not only for them but also for their children and wives, no one could be compared with him. Towards rebels, he was terrible and pitiless, but was a true benefactor not only to the nobility but to all his people. In '46, when the locusts had destroyed the crops, he remitted all the rents of his tenantry for a whole year and commanded his subjects to give out grain from their stores; and after the great fire in Khorol, he maintained all the citizens for two months at his own charge. The farmers and vice-starosts on the estates trembled lest the slightest rumor should come to the ear of the prince of any ill-treatment or wrong that should happen to the peasants. He exercised such a watchfulness over orphans that in the Dnieper country they received the nickname of "The Prince's children." They were the special care of Princess Grizela, and Father Mukhovietski was her firm ally. Therefore, all through the prince's territory, order, prosperity, justice, and

peace reigned; but also, terror; for at the least sign of rebellion the prince's anger and punishment were unbounded, so closely allied in his nature were broadmindedness and severity. In those days and in those countries, it was only this severity that could diffuse and establish civilization and, with its help, towns and villages arose; the former could get the upper hand of the robber haydamak, the merchant could peacefully sell his wares, the bells could call the faithful peacefully to prayer. Only by its help could the enemy be prevented from crossing the borders, and could the multitude of robber-bands be destroyed or turned into disciplined soldiers; only by its help could the desert lands be made to flourish.

The wild territory and the wild inhabitants required just such a hand as that of the prince; for, in the Dnieper district, the most restless elements came from the Ukraine; colonists enticed thither by the fruitfulness of the soil; runaway peasants from all parts of the Commonwealth; criminals who had escaped from prison; in a word, as Livy says: "*Pastorum convenarumque plebs transfuga ex suispopulis.*' To hold these elements in bounds, to transform them into peaceful settlers and to enchain them in the fetters of civilized life, a lion was needed at whose roar all trembled.

Pan Longin Podbipyenta who saw the prince, for the first time in his life at the funeral could hardly believe his own eyes, for he had heard so much of his fame that he had imagined he must be a giant, who overtopped the rest of men by a head at least. But in fact, the prince was almost undersized and rather thin. He was still young, only in his thirty-sixth year, but his face bore traces of the hardships of war, for although in Lubni he lived as a veritable king; during his numerous military expeditions, he partook of the hardships of the simplest companion, eat black bread, and slept upon the ground on a felt rug, and, as he spent the greater part of his time in camp, the traces of his hardships were visible in his features. But his face, at first glance gave evidence of an extraordinary man. It portrayed an unyielding iron will and a majesty before which everyone involuntarily bowed his head. One could see that this man understood his power and his greatness and if to-morrow a crown should be set on his head, he would neither be astonished nor feel oppressed by its weight. His eyes were large, peaceful, almost gentle, and yet fire seemed to sleep in their depths.

One felt that it would go hard with him who should awaken that fire. No one could enter the flash of that glance; even ambassadors, experienced courtiers, when they came in Yeremy's presence, were confused and knew not how to begin their speech. He was really in this country of the Dnieper a true king. From his office, privileges and grants were sent abroad, headed: "We, by the grace of God, Prince and Hospodar, etc." He considered very few lords his equals, princes of the blood of the old rulers were marshals at his court, such a one was in his time the father of Helena, Vasil Bulyhov Kurtsevich, whose race, as told before took its origin in Koryat and, in truth, went back as far as Ruryk.

There was something about Prince Yeremy that, in spite of his natural benevolence, kept men at a distance. He loved his soldiers and treated them familiarly—but no one dared to treat him with it. And yet if he had commanded his officers to plunge on horseback into the Dnieper—they would have done it without hesitating.

From his Wallachian mother, he had inherited his fair waxen complexion like iron at white heat; and hair black as the wings of a crow, which was shaven all over his head except above his brow, where it hung down in luxuriant locks. It was cut straight across the forehead which it half covered. He wore the Polish dress, but paid little attention to his apparel, and only on great occasions wore costly garments; but then, he glittered all over from head to foot in gold and precious stones. Pan Longin happened a few days later to be present on such an occasion when the prince was giving audience to Rozvan-Ursu. The ambassadors were always received in the Elue Hall, so called, because on the ceiling was the firmament set with stars, painted by the brush of the Dantzig artist, Helm. The prince took his seat under a baldachin of velvet and ermine, upon a raised seat similar to a throne, whose footstool was covered with gilded work. Behind the prince stood the priest Mukhovietski, the Secretary, the marshal, Count Voronich, Pan Boguslav, Mashkievich; then came the pages, and twelve attendants in Spanish garb carrying their halberds.

The background of the hall was filled with knights in glittering apparel and jewelry. Pan Rozvan entreated in the name of the hospodar that the prince, through his influence and the terror of his name, might carry out in the Khan's dominions the ordinance against the Tartars of Budziak, that

they should no longer be allowed to attack Wallachia, for they had been in the habit of perpetrating frightful damage and destruction each year. Thereupon the prince answered in excellent Latin, that the Budziaks had no great respect for the Khan's authority, but that when Chausa Murza the ambassador of the Khan should arrive, as he expected, in April, he would, through him, make representations to the Khan regarding the Wallachian outrages. Pan Skshetuski had already given the prince a full report of his journey and his embassy as well as all that he had heard about Khmyelnitski and his flight to Sich. The prince determined to send some regiments to Kudak, but he did not attach much importance to this matter. As peace reigned and nothing seemed to threaten the power of the Dnieper regions, all kinds of festivities and entertainments took place in Lubni both in honor of the presence of the Ambassador Rozvan as well as because Pan Bodzynski and Lassota had with due ceremony in the name of the Voyevoda's son Pshiyemski made a formal request for the hand of the elder princess Anna and had received a favorable answer from the prince and the Princess Grizelda.

Only little Volodiyovski suffered on that account no slight pain; and when Skshetuski sought to console him, he answered:

"It is all very well for you to talk; if you only wish it, you know Anna Borzobahata will not refuse you. She has thought frequently of you while you were away. At first I thought she pretended to like you in order to excite Bykhoviets' jealousy, but I see she was only quietly hanging him on the hook and feels a lively affection for you alone."

"What is Anna to me! Turn to her, I don't forbid, but give up thinking about Princess Anna. It is exactly like trying to cover a phœnix's nest with a cap."

"I know well that she is a phœnix and therefore, I shall certainly die for sorrow."

"You will live and soon fall in love again, but not with Princess Barbara, for the son of some other Voyevoda will carry her off from under your nose."

"Is the heart a slave that can be commanded? Can you hinder your eyes from admiring such a wonderful being as Princess Barbara, the sight of whom is enough to move even wild animals."

"Devil, you have a covering," cried Skshetuski, "I see that

you do not need me to comfort you, but I repeat, return to Anusia, I will not stand in your way."

Anusia, however, gave no thought to Volodiyovski. Skshetuski's indifference on the contrary provoked her, made her curious, and annoyed her. After being away so long, he hardly glanced at her. In the evenings when the prince with the distinguished officers and courtiers came into the prince's sitting room, to pass the time in conversation, Anusia would look around the shoulders of her mistress (for the princess was tall and Anusia was short), her black eyes fixed inquiringly upon the face of the lieutenant, trying to solve this riddle. But Skshetuski's eyes, like his thoughts, were wandering, and if his eyes chanced to fall on Anusia, they were absorbed in thought and glassy, as though he hardly saw her,—her to whom he once sang:

"The Tartar makes captives of people,
But thou makest captives of hearts!"

"What has happened to him," the spoiled darling of the whole court asked herself, and stamping her little foot upon the ground she determined that she would get to the bottom of the matter. She did not really love Skshetuski, but she was so accustomed to homage that she could not endure that any one should not notice her, and for very pique she was ready to fall in love with the daring fellow.

One day when she was taking a skein of thread to the Princess she met Skshetuski, who was just coming out of the bedroom of the prince. She ran up against his breast like a storm and then suddenly recoiled and said:

"Ah! What a fright I had! Good morning, sir!"

"Good day, Panna Anna! Have I done something monstrous to frighten Panna Anna?"

The girl stood there with her eyes cast down, twisting the end of her long braid with the fingers of her empty hand, resting first on one foot and then on the other, and answered with a smile as though confused:

"Oh, no, not that—not at all—as I love my Mother."

Then all at once, she looked up at the lieutenant and immediately let her eyes fall again.

"Are you angry with me?"

"I, as if Panna Anna cared for my anger!"

"Why no, in truth, not. Why should I care! Or do you think perhaps I am going to cry? Pan Bikhovyets is more polite."

"Well, there is nothing for it then but to give place to Pan Bikhovyets and to disappear from Panna Anna's sight."

"Do I detain you?"

Then Anusia placed herself right in his way.

"You have just come back from the Crimea?" she said.

"From the Crimea?"

"And what did you bring back from the Crimea?"

"I brought Pan Podbipyenta back with me. You have seen him? He is an amiable and stately cavalier."

"He might easily be more amiable than you. Why did he come here?"

"In order that Panna Anna might have some one on whom she might try her power. But I would advise you to set about it carefully, for I know a secret about this gentleman that makes him invulnerable. . . Even Panna Anna will not be able to do anything with him."

"Why is he invulnerable?"

"Because he cannot marry."

"What does that matter to me? Why can he not marry?"

Skshetuski leaned over the maiden's ear, but said very loudly and impressively:

"Because he has taken a vow of chastity."

"You idiot!" said Anna, and disappeared in a moment like a frightened bird.

But that very evening she observed Pan Longin attentively for the first time. There were many guests assembled on this day, for the princess was giving a farewell dinner to Pan Bodzynski. Our Lithuanian, carefully dressed in a white satin coat, and a dark blue velvet waistcoat looked very stately, and more so, as, instead of his cowl-shearing sword he wore a light scimitar in a golden sheath at his side.

Anna's little eyes were aimed at Longin somewhat intentionally to annoy Skshetuski. The lieutenant, however, would have paid no attention if Volodiyovski had not nudged him and said:

"May I fall into the hands of the heathen if Anna is not beginning a flirtation with that Lithuanian hop-pole."

"Tell him that."

"Certainly I will tell him. They would make a capital pair. He could wear her as the clasp of his coat, such is the proportion between them."

"Or instead of a tassel on his cap."

Volodiyovski stepped up to the Lithuanian:

"You have not been here long," said he, "but I see that you are a lady-killer."

"What is it? little brother."

"You have caught the most beautiful lady in waiting in the whole court."

"But, Sir," said Podbipyenta, folding his hands; "what do you mean?"

"Just look at Panna Anna Borzobahata whom we are all in love with. How she is shooting at you with her little eyes! But, beware that she does not lead you a dance, as she has led many of us already."

Volodiyovski turned away and went off, leaving Longin to his astonishment. He did not dare to look over in the direction where Anusia was. It was not for some time that he glanced over there, but he was fairly frightened.

From behind the shoulders of Princess Grizelda, looked two bright eyes, full of curiosity and interest. Get behind me Satan! thought the Lithuanian and fled, blushing like a school-boy, to the other end of the room.

But the temptation was too great. The little minx who looked around the shoulders of the princess, was so attractive and her little eyes shone so brightly that Pan Longin felt drawn somewhat in that direction, if to see her only once more. Then he thought of his vow; his ancestor, Stoveyko Podbipyenta; the three trunkless heads stood before his eyes, and a terror seized him. He crossed himself and did not look in her direction once again that evening. The following morning, however, he betook himself to Skshetuski's quarters.

"Lieutenant, are we soon going to march? What have you heard about the war?"

"Are you in such haste? Have patience until you get your commission."

Pan Podbipyenta had in fact not yet replaced the late Zakshevski. He had to wait until three months had elapsed and that would not be until the first of April, but he was really anxious to know, so he asked the lieutenant again:

"And has not his Excellency, the prince, said anything about this matter?"

"Not a word. The king will never, until he dies, give up the idea of this war; but the Commonwealth does not wish it."

"And in Chigrin they say a Cossack rebellion is threatened."

"It is easy to see that your vow bothers you a good deal.

As far as the rebellion is concerned, you may as well know that it will not take place till spring. Even if winter is mild, winter is still winter. It is only February fifteenth, any day we may have frost and the Cossack will never take the field unless he can throw up earth-works to protect himself; for, behind the earth-works, he can fight splendidly, but in the open field, he cannot hold his own."

"So then we shall have to wait for the Cossacks!"

"Consider besides, that even if during the rebellion you should find your three heads, it is still a question whether you are free from your vow; for it is one thing to kill Crusaders or Turks, and another to kill—how shall I say it—your own—the children of the same mother."

"That's a knotty point. That is desperate. Father Mukhovyetski must solve these doubts for me; otherwise we shall not have a moment's peace."

"Certainly he will solve them, for he is a learned and pious man; but certainly he will not say otherwise. Civil war, that it a war between brothers."

"And if a foreign power should come to the assistance of the rebels!"

"Then you might have the field, but for the present, I can only advise you one thing—wait and be patient."

Skshetuski could not, however, follow this advice himself. His longing increased more and more. The court festivities and the faces that he formerly looked at with pleasure were now wearisome to him. Pan Bodzynski and Pan Lassota and Pan Rozvan-Ursu had at length gone away, and after their departure, everything was very quiet. Life began to flow along monotonously. The prince was occupied with making an inventory of his enormous possessions and shut himself up every morning with his commissioners who had come together from the whole of Russia and from the Sandonmirski territory—so that even the military exercises now seldom could take place. The brilliant military festivities, at which the future war was discussed, were very distasteful to Skshetuski. Therefore he took his gun and escaped to the Solonits, where long years before Zolievski had so thoroughly beaten Nalevayka, Loboda, and Krenpski. The traces of that battle were already extinct in the memory of man, as well as the scene of the battle. From time to time, however, the earth threw up whitened bones and on the other side of the water, Cossack earthworks rose behind which Loboda's Zaporojians and Nale-

vayka's freebooters defended themselves so desperately; but now, on the intrenchment grew luxuriant brush. Thither Skshetuski went to seek refuge from the stir of the court life and instead of shooting birds, he gave himself up to meditation. There, before the eyes of his soul, stood the form of his beloved, brought there by remembrance and by the wish of his heart. There, amid the mists, the rustling of the reeds, and the melancholy of the surroundings, he found an alleviation for his longings.

Soon, however, rains that announced the spring, began to pour down. The Solonits changed to a swamp; one dared not to put his head out of doors and the lieutenant was deprived of the consolation of his wanderings. His restlessness increased meanwhile and not without cause. He had hoped in the beginning that the Princess Kurtsevich and Helena, as soon as the princess was able to send Bohun away, would come to Lubni; now, however, this hope was extinguished. The wet weather had destroyed the roads; the steppes on both sides of the Suly for several miles were an enormous swamp that could only be crossed by wading, until the warm spring sun had absorbed the water and the dampness. All this time, Helena was obliged to remain in the care of those whom Skshetuski did not trust, in a veritable wolf's den, among uncultivated, wild people, whose feelings were hostile to Skshetuski. For their own good indeed they were obliged to keep their word—and they had no other way—but who could say what they might plan, what they might dare, especially as that terrible Cossack chief, whom they evidently loved and at the same time feared, was in their neighborhood. It would not be difficult for him to oblige them to give him the girl. Such cases were not rare.

Years before, Loboda, the comrade of the unfortunate Nalevayka had obliged Panna Poplinska to give him her ward as a wife, although the girl was of noble birth and hated the rebel leader with her whole heart. And if it were true that Bohun possessed such immense treasures, he could pay them not only for the girl, but also for the loss of Rozloga, and what then? Then thought Skshetuski—they will inform me contemptuously that "The hunt is over" and they themselves will hide in the Lithuanian or Mazurian deserts where even the mighty hand of the prince could not reach them.

Skshetuski shuddered at this thought as if he had a fever; raged like a wolf at his chain; regretted that he had given his

knightly word to the princess—and knew not what he should do. And he was a man who did not easily let chance lead him by the beard. In his nature he had great enterprise and energy. He did not wait for what fate might have in store; he preferred to take fate by the neck and oblige it to bring him fortune. Therefore it was harder for him than for another to sit in Lubni with his hands folded.

He resolved therefore to act. He had a serving boy, Jendzian, an impoverished noble Podlasian.[1] He was only sixteen, but he was a rascal who could not be surpassed by any old fox. Skshetuski resolved to send him to Helena and obtain at once information about her. February had come to an end; the rains were over. March appeared to promise milder weather and the roads were somewhat improved. Jendzian set out, therefore, on his way. Skshetuski provided him with a letter, with paper, pen, and a bottle of ink, which he commanded him to treasure as the eye in his head; for he remembered that these things were not to be had in Rozloga. He also warned the boy not to say from whom he came, but to say that he was travelling to Chigrin and to carefully note all that he saw; and especially to get exact information about Bohun, where he was, and what he was doing. Jendzian did not need to have the instructions repeated; but, setting his cap on one side of his head, whirled his whip in the air, and rode off.

Skshetuski had now passed weary days of expectation. In order to kill time, he took up fencing with Pan Volodiyovski, who was a great master of the art; or threw javelins at a mark. An event took place in Lubni by which the lieutenant nearly lost his life. One day a bear broke loose from his chain, wounded two of the stablemen of the court, frightened the Commissioner Khlebovski's horse, and sprang on the lieutenant as he was coming out of the armory on his way to see the prince, without his sword at his side, and only a light pole-axe, with a brass head in his hand. The lieutenant would assuredly have been killed if Longin, who saw everything from the armory window, had not seized his Cowl-Trencher and hastened to his assistance. Pan Longin showed himself a worthy descendant of his ancestor, Stoveyka. Before the eyes of the whole household, with one stroke of his sword, he cut off the bear's snout, as well as his paws. This

[1] A four-footed rogue.

proof of extraordinary strength astonished the prince who was looking out of a window. He conducted Pan Longin to the room of the princess where Anna Borzobahata fascinated him so with her little eyes that the following day, he did not let himself be seen, in order by earnest prayer to resist all temptation.

Meanwhile, ten days had elapsed, and Jendzian had not yet returned. Skshetuski began to grow thin from suspense and to look so ill that even Anusia sent a messenger to ask what ailed him—and Carboni, the Court doctor prescribed him some kind of draught against melancholy. But he needed something more than this potion. Day and night he thought of his princess—and felt more than ever that it was not a passing emotion that had taken possession of him, but a great love which must be satisfied, or it would break his heart like a fragile vessel. His joy therefore could easily be imagined when one day, Jendzian stepped into his quarters, covered with mud, weary and bedraggled, but with good news written on his brow. The lieutenant sprang out of bed, ran to meet him, seized him by the arm and shouted:

"Have you a letter?"

"I have, sir! Here it is."

The lieutenant snatched it quickly from his hand and began to read; he had long doubted whether, even if things were favorable, Jendzian would bring him a letter, for he was not certain that Helena could write. Women in the border lands were not learned, and Helena, besides, had grown up among uneducated people. But her father had evidently taught her this art, for she had written a long letter, covering four pages of the paper. The poor little woman could not indeed express herself with rhetorical grace, but she wrote from her heart as follows:

"I will never forget thee, but you may soon forget me, for I hear that there are flirts among you. But if thou hast sent thy boy so many miles on purpose, I see that I am dear to thee as thou art to me, for which I thank thee gratefully. Do not think, Sir, that it is contrary to modesty if I write to thee of my love; but is it not better to speak the truth than to lie, or to conceal it, if one has anything else in their heart? I also asked Jendzian what is doing in Lubni and what are the manners of the great court, and when he told me of the beauty and the graceful manners of the young ladies there, I cried for sadness."

Here the lieutenant interrupted his reading and asked Jendzian:

"What did you tell her, you idiot?"

"Everything good, sir—" answered Jendzian.

The lieutenant read on:

" . . . . . How shall I, a simple maiden, compare myself with them; but the boy told me, that thou dost not look at any of them. . . . "

"You said well!" remarked the lieutenant.

Jendzian did not know what Skshetuski was talking about, for he read the letter to himself; but he looked very knowing and cleared his throat meaningly. Skshetuski continued to read:

" . . . . . So I was immediately comforted and prayed God to continue to keep thee in such an affectionate disposition towards me and to bless us both, Amen. I have longed for thee as for my mother; for, for me, an orphan, the world is sad, but not for thee. . . . . God looks in my heart and sees that it is pure and thou wilt pardon my lack of education. . . . . "

Then the pretty little princess told him that she was going to Lubni with her aunt as soon as the roads became passable and that the Princess herself wished to hurry the journey, as news of a Cossack rebellion had come from Chigrin. She was waiting only the return of the young princes who had driven to Boguslav to the horse-fair.

"You are a real magician," continued Helena, "to have won my aunt over."

The lieutenant smiled when he remembered by what means he had won her aunt. The letter closed with the assurance of stedfast, faithful love, such as a betrothed owes to her future husband. The whole letter revealed a pure, true heart; and the lieutenant read this dear letter several times from beginning to end and he repeated in his soul, "My darling girl! May God forsake me if I ever fail you."

Now he began to question Jendzian about everything. The sly fellow gave him an exact account of his journey? They had received him well. The old princess had inquired about the lieutenant and after she learned that he was a distinguished knight and the confidant of the prince and, besides that, a man of means, she appeared satisfied.

"She also asked me," said Jendzian, "if the lieutenant when he promised anything, was sure always to keep his

word; and I answered her, 'Gracious Lady, if the little Wallach pony upon which I rode here were promised me I should be sure that he would not escape me. . . . "

"You're a rascal," said the lieutenant, "but as you did me such good service, you shall have him. You did not conceal your identity then, but said who sent you?"

"I said so because I saw that I might venture to do it and they received me all the more kindly, especially the young lady, who is so beautiful that she has not her superior in the whole world; and when she heard that I had come from your Honor, she did not know what she could do for me. If it had not been a fast day, she would have loaded me with everything as in Heaven. She wept with joy as she read your Excellency's letter."

The lieutenant was silent from joy, and presently, he asked again:

"Did you hear nothing about Bohun?"

"It did not appear wise to ask the young lady or the old Princess anything about him, but I made friends with old Chekhly. He is a heathen, but yet a faithful servant of the yonng lady. He told me that they had all grumbled at first about your Excellency, but afterwards they appeared to be satisfied; and the reason was that they learned that all that had been told about Bohun's treasures was a fable."

"And how did they become convinced of this?"

"See here, your Excellency, this is how it was: They had a feud with the Sivinskis to whom they had bound themselves to make a payment. When the money was due, they said to Bohun: "Lend us some money!' He answered however, 'Turkish property' I have a certain amount of, but treasure I have none; for what I once possessed, I have run through.' As they heard this he seemed to decrease in value in their sight—and they turned their love over to you."

"I have nothing to say, but that you made all the inquiries I wanted."

"My lord, if I had inquired after one thing and not after another, you would have said to me with justice; 'The horse thou mayst have, but the saddle I shall keep back!' What would my master do with a horse without a saddle?"

"Well, well, take the saddle too."

"I thank my master most humbly. They sent Bohum immediately to Pereyaslav. When I learned that, I thought to myself, 'Why should I not go to Pereyaslav?' If my master is satisfied with me, I shall more readily receive my colors. ."

"You shall have them at the next quarter. So you went to Pereyaslav?"

"I did, but I did not find Bohun there. The old Colonel Loboda is ill. They say he will not last long and Bohun will become Colonel. . . But there is something strange going on there. Of all his Semenovs, it is said that only a handful remain under his colors—the rest of them, they say, have gone over to Bohun, or have fled to Sich and that, gracious sir, is a serious matter. There must be a rebellion under consideration there. I absolutely insisted upon learning something about Bohun, but all they could tell me was that he had gone over to the Russian bank of the Dnieper[1], so I think if that is the case, our young lady is safe from him. And then I came home."

"You have done well. Did you have any adventures on your journey?"

"No, gracious sir, but I am frightfully hungry."

Jendzian went out and the lieutenant who was left alone began to read over Helena's letter and to press those characters that were not as graceful as the hand which had formed them, to his lips. His heart was full of hope and he thought to himself: 'The roads will soon be dry if God gives us fine weather. The Kurtseviches then, who have now found out that Bohun is a beggar, will not care to betray me. I will leave them Rozloga and give them some of my own property, if I can only attain that beloved star. . . "

He dressed himself and went, with beaming face and joyful heart, into the chapel, to give humble thanks to God for the good news.

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[1] The right side of the Dnieper is called Russian; and the left, Tartar.

CHAPTER VI.

Over the whole Ukraine and the country beyond the Dneiper, mutterings were heard as of an approaching tempest. Strange reports and tidings flew from village to village, from farm to farm, like those plants which the wind in Autumn carries across the steppes and which the peasants call perekotypol. In the towns there were rumors of an approaching great war, although no one knew who would lead it, or against whom it would be undertaken. Something must come however. The faces of men became anxious; the farmer went reluctantly to plough his fields, although an early, peaceful warm spring had come, and over the breadth of the steppes the larks were singing. In the evenings, the men in the villages gathered in crowds; stopped in the middle of the road and gossiped in low tones about terrible rumors. The blind beggars who travelled with lyres and songs were eagerly asked for news. To many it seemed as if they saw a glow in the heavens at night, and as if the moon rose more red than usual behind the forests. Calamities were prophesied, and the death of the king; and it was all the more wonderful as, in this part of the country, which, from time immemorial, had been accustomed to unrest, wars, invasions, or fear did not easily find an entrance. There must therefore be evil omens in the air, as the alarm was universal.

It was all the more oppressive, all the more terrifying, as no one could point out the danger. But among the signs of threatening danger, two, especially, seemed to be of prime importance. First, an unheard-of crowd of travelling, blind singers were seen in every village and town; and among them were strangers, unknown forms, and it was whispered that they were pretended beggars. They travelled everywhere and prophesied mysteriously that the day of judgment and of divine wrath was at hand. Then, the Nijovs began to drink as if to excess.

The second sign was even more ominous. Sich, which was enclosed in narrow boundaries could not support all its inha-

bitants; warlike expeditions did not always take place and in their absence the steppes did not give bread to the Cossacks. Consequently a great number of the Nijovs scattered abroad in times of peace in the inhabited districts. Numbers of them were in the Ukraine. Yes, even in the whole of Russia. Some of them joined the following of the Starosta, others dispensed vodka in the street; others occupied themselves in the villages and small towns with commerce and professions. In almost every village, there stood not far from the other dwellings a cabin, in which lived a Zaporojian. Some of them had a wife and kept house in these cabins, and such a Zaporojian, one who was generally capable, was in some respects a benefit to the villages in which he lived. There were no better smiths, wheelwrightes, tanners, wax-bleachers, fishermen, and sportmen than they. The Cossack understood everything, could make anything; he could build a house, and could sew a saddle. Usually, however, the Cossacks were not permanent settlers, for they always lived for the moment. Whoever desired to execute the law with the might of arms; to attack his neighbors, or, fearing their attack, wished to defend himself, such a one needed only to shout and the Cossacks came flying to him like crows to their prey. The nobility, those landed proprietors who were continually at feud with one another, made use of them. When the Cossacks had no such services to perform, they remained quietly in the villages and earned with the severest toil, and by the sweat of their brow, their daily bread.

This lasted sometimes for a year, two years, until suddenly news would be spread of some great military expedition, either between an Ottonman against the Tartars or against the Poles, or by the petty lords of Poland against Wallachia —and, quick as a flash, these smiths, wheelwrights, tanners and wax-bleachers, cast aside their quiet occupations and began first of all to drink unto death in all the wineshops of the Ukraine.

When they had drunk up all their money, they drank on credit, "not on what it is but on what it will be." The future booty would pay for the revel. This happened so regularly that, in later times, people who knew the Ukraine well were accustomed to say "Aha! the wine shops are packed full of Nijovs; something must be preparing in the Ukraine."

And then the starostas would strengthen the fortifications of their castles and watch all signs carefully; the lords

gathered together their retainers; the nobility sent their wives and children into the towns.

This spring the Cossacks began to drink harder than ever; to dissipate blindly every hard-earned possession; and this not only in one district, in one province, but in the whole length and breadth of Russia.

So there really was something on foot, although the Nijovs did not know what it was. Men began to speak of Khmyelnitski; of his flight to Sich; of the people from Cherkass; Boguslav, Korsun and other towns that had gone over to him —they also told other stories. For many years rumors had been spread of a great war with the heathen, which the King favored in order to provide booty for his good Cossacks but which the Poles did not desire—and now all these rumors were mixed up in people's heads and caused excitement and the expectation of something unusual.

This alarm had also pierced through the walls of Lubni. It was impossible to shut one's eyes and ears to all these signs; and Prince Yeremiy, especially, was the last man to do such a thing. In his dominions, it is true, the restlessness did not go beyond bounds. Fear held everyone in check; but after a time news came from the Ukraine that here and there the peasants were beginning to raise opposition to the nobility; that they were killing the Jews; that they were seeking earnestly to enlist in the war against the heathen; and that the number of deserters to Sich was growing daily.

The Prince therefore sent out messengers; to Pan Krakovski; to Pan Kalinovski; to Loboda in Pereyaslav; and he even recalled the herds from the steppes, and his forces from his outposts.

All this time quieting news was coming in. The chief hetman told the prince all that the knew about Khymelnitski; but did not believe that any storm could result. The Grand Hetman wrote: "The people riot every Spring like swarms of bees." The old standard-bearer Zatsvilikhovski alone conjured the prince in a letter not to take matters too lightly. A great storm was brewing in the direction of the Wild Lands. He announced that Khymelnitski has hastened from Sich to the Crimea to beg the Khan for assistance." And as friends from Sich have told me—he wrote, "that there the Koshov commander has gathered together from all the rivers and hiding places, infantry and cavalry, without saying a word to anyone about it, and the reason he

does it, in my belief, is that this storm is going to break on us in all its fury; and if the Tartars are called in to assist, may God grant that it does not bring destruction to all the territory of Russia."

The Prince trusted Zatsvilikhovski even more than the Hetmans. He knew well that in the whole of Russia no one knew the Cossacks and their ways so well as he did. He resolved therefore to gather together as many soldiers as he could and at the same time to learn the truth.

One morning he sent for Colonel Bikhovyets, the commander of the Wallach regiment, and said to him:

"You will go in my name as ambassador to Sich to the Attaman of Koshovs and take him this letter with my princely seal. In order, however, that you may know what course you must take, I will tell you this much: the letter is a pretext, and the whole responsibility of the embassy depends on your adroitness; you must observe everything that is going on there; how many men they have called to arms and how many they are still calling. One thing I specially command you, to obtain the confidence of some of the people and find out everything about Khmyelnitski, where he is, and if it is true that he has gone to the Crimea to ask for assistance from the Tartars, do you understand?"

"As though it were written on my hand."

"You will go by way of Chigrin. Do not stay anywhere longer than one night; as soon as you reach Chigrin, go to the standard-bearer Zatsvilikhovski and ask him to give you letters to his friends in Sich which you will give to them privately. They will tell you everything. From Chigrin you will go to Kudak by boat. Salute Pan Grodzitski for me and hand him this letter. He will see to it that you get through the Porog and will send the necessary escort with you. Do not stop in Sich. Look, listen, and return, if you are alive; for this is no easy expedition."

"Your Highness is the ruler of my life. How many men shall I take with me?"

"You will take forty men. To-day, towards evening, you will set out. Before that time, come to me again for instructions. I am intrusting you with an important mission."

Pan Bikhoveyets went out full of joy. In the ante-room, he met Skshetuski with some artillery officers.

"What's up?" they asked him.

"I am going away to-day."

"Where to! Where to?"

"To Chigrin, and from there elsewhere."

"Then come with me," said Skshetuski, and he led him into his quarters, and began to beg him to let him take his place on this mission.

"As true as you're my friend," he said, "ask what you will, a Turkish horse, a Spanish horse; you shall have it. Nothing would be too costly if I could only get in your place; for my soul longs intensely for those countries. Do you want money? You have it if you will let me go. It cannot bring fame, for, if there is to be war, it will come in the meantime, and you may leave your life on the field. I know also that Anusia loves you as much as others—if you go away, they will lure her away from you."

This last argument weighed more with Bikhovyets than any of the others, but he withstood it, nevertheless. What would the Prince say if he should withdraw; would he be angry? Was not such a commission a special mark of the Prince's favor?

When Skshetuski heard this, he hastened to the prince and had himself at once announced by a page. The page returned with the command for the lieutenant to enter.

Skshetuski's heart thumped like a hammer for fear he should receive a curt "no," in reply; and then there would have been nothing for him to do but to give up everything.

"Well, what have you to say to me?" began the Prince as he received the lieutenant.

Skshetuski made a low bow.

"My Prince! I came here to beg in all humanity that you would entrust me with the embassy to Sich. Bikhovyets would probably withdraw, for he's my friend; and my very life depends on this matter. Bikhovyets fears only that your Prince's Highness might be annoyed with him."

"By God," said the Prince, "I would rather have sent you than anyone; but I thought you would not wish to go, as you had so recently returned from such a long journey."

"My Prince, if I were sent there every day, I would willingly go to that region."

The Prince looked at him earnestly with his black eyes and presently asked:

"What have you over there?"

The Lieutenant stood embarrassed as if he were guilty and could not endure the searching glance.

"I see that I must tell the truth," he began, "for no secret can withstand your Highness's penetration, but I do not know if I shall obtain a favorable hearing from your Highness."

And then he went on to tell how he had made the acquaintance of Prince Vasil's daughter; had learned to love her, and how he now yearned to see her, and on his return from Sich would bring her back to Lubni with him, to save her from the Cossack rebellion and from Bohun's persistent attentions. But about the old Princess's machinations he was silent, for his word bound him; but he entreated the Prince so earnestly to entrust him with the mission that he had given to Bikhovyets that the Prince said:

"I would like you to go in any case and would also give you an escort, and as you have already arranged everything so cleverly in combining your own love affairs with this undertaking, I suppose I must do this for you?"

Then he clapped his hands and commanded the page to call Bikhovyets.

The lieutenant kissed the prince's hand for joy. Prince Yeremy, however, placed both hands on Skshetuski's head and advised him to be calm. He loved him as a valiant soldier and officer on whom he could always depend. Besides this, there existed between them the union which arises between an inferior who trusts those above him with his whole soul and the superior who appreciates that feeling. A crowd of courtiers surrounded the prince who served him and flattered him for their own interests; but the penetrating eye of Prince Yeremy judged well what he might expect from such. He knew that Skshetuski was genuine—he valued him therefore and was grateful to him for his devotion. He also heard with pleasure, that his favorite loved the daughter of Prince Vasil, the old servant of the Vishnovyetskis whose memory was all the more dear to the Prince from the fact that it had such sad associations.

"It is not from ingratitude to Prince Vasil," said the prince, that I have neglected to inquire for his daughter. But as her guardians never came to Lubni, and as I heard no complaints against them, I took it for granted they were good people. As you have brought her to my remembrance, I will think of her as of a blood relation."

Skshetuski, hearing this, was lost in admiration of the kindness of the prince, who seemed to reproach himself that

among his manifold affairs, he had not interested himself in the fate of the child of his old soldier and courtier.

Meanwhile Bikhovyets had entered.

"Listen," said the prince, "I gave you my orders: if you want to go, you may do so, but, if you will oblige me, give up your mission to Skshetuski. He has very particular reasons for asking this, and I will think of some other recompense."

"My Prince," answered Bikhovyets, "it is a great favor of your Highness, who may command what he will, to allow me to make a choice; and I were not worthy of this honor—did I not accept your wishes with a grateful heart."

"Thank your friend," said the prince, "and you," turning to Skshetuski, "prepare for the road."

Skshetuski fervently thanked Bikhovyets and in a few hours he was ready. He could not have stayed much longer in Lubni; and this expedition accorded with all his wishes. First, he would see Helena, and then he must be separated from her for a long time; but just so much time was necessary, for the roads were almost impassible on account of the great rains.

Until they were in better condition, the princess could not come to Lubni with Helena. Skshetuski would have had, therefore, to wait in Lubni or in Rozloga, which latter was contrary to his agreement with the princess—and what was still worse, would awaken Bohun's suspicions. It was certain that Helena would not be safe from his attentions until she reached Lubni. Therefore, as she had to remain some time longer in Rozloga, Skshetuski judged it best to leave Rozloga, and on his return, to take her away under the protection of the prince's soldiers. The lieutenant had weighed all these things and this hastened his journey. After he had arranged his own affairs; received his letters and instructions from the prince, and the money for the expedition from the treasurer, he set out on his journey long before night-fall, taking with him Jendzian and forty Semenovs from the prince's Cossack regiment.

CHAPTER VII.

It was already the latter half of March. The grass grew luxuriantly; the buttercups were in flower, and life was awakening in the steppes. As the lieutenant the following morning rode at the head of his men, it seemed as if he were on an ocean whose waves were swaying the undulating wind-blown grass of the steppes.

In all directions sounded the joyful voices of spring and of happiness: The calls and clucking and twittering of birds, whistling, flapping of wings, the joyous humming of insects. The sounds of the steppes were like a lyre played by the hand of God. Above the heads of the horsemen flew hawks who seemed to be fixed immovably in the blue sky, like suspended crosses; triangular flights of wild geese; strings of cranes; and on the earth, herds of wild horses, moving here and there. Look there! a herd of horses of the steppes; see how they beat back the grass with their breasts! they rush by like a storm; and then suddenly stand still like statues, and surround the riders in a semicircle; their manes floating in the wind, their nostrils distended; their eyes wide open in astonishment as if they would drive away the unwelcome guests. But in a moment—they take to flight and disappear as quickly as they came. Only the grass rustles, only the flowers gleam! The tramping of hoofs is silent; one hears nothing now but the cries of birds. Gaiety and joy seem paramount and yet there is a sad strain through all the gladness of this land; inhabited, and yet so desolate—so limitless, so immense! No horse can traverse it; no thought can span it. . . . . One must learn to love this sadness, this wilderness, these steppes; and with yearning soul cleave to them, rest on their grave-mounds; listen to their voices, and answer.

It was morning; heavy dewdrops glistened on the herbs and meadows; a refreshing morning wind swept over the ground which after a heavy rain was full of large puddles, that looked like little lakes, in the sunlight. The lieutenant's train moved slowly forward; for they could not hurry, as the

horses often sank up to their knees in the soft earth; but Skshetuski gave them little time to rest on the high mounds, for he was hastening forward at once to a welcome and to a farewell. On the second day at noon, just as he was riding out of a wood, he saw in the distance the wind-mills of Rozloga scattered about the surrounding hills. His heart beat like a hammer. No one there expected him; no one knew that he was coming; what would she say when she saw him? And there already were the cabins of their neighbors almost hidden in the young cherry orchards. Then the straggling village of the serfs; and farther in the distance the crane of the well in the courtyard of the castle. The lieutenant put spurs to his horse and rode on at a gallop, his attendants following him. In this manner, they passed through the village with noise and clatter. Here and there a peasant stepped out of his cabin, looked after them and, crossing himself, said, "Are those devils or not, Tartars or not Tartars?" The mud splashed from their horses' hoofs so that one could hardly see who the riders were. Meanwhile they had reached the courtyard of Rozloga and had come to a halt before the open gate.

"Hey, there! open the gate, whoever is there!"

The noise, the knocking, and the barking of the dogs had called the people out of the house. They hastened, in terror, to the gate, expecting an attack.

"Who's there?"

"Open the gate!"

"The princes are not at home."

"Open the gate, you son of a heathen; we are from the Prince, in Lubni."

Finally, the servants recognized Skshetuski.

"Ah! that is your grace; immediately! immediately!"

The gate was opened and the old princess herself stepped out into the hall, put her hand up to shade her eyes and peered at the new arrivals.

Skshetuski sprang from his horse, approached her and said:

"Gracious princess, do you not recognize me?"

"Ah! it is you, Lieutenant; I thought it was a Tartar attack. I greet you and beg you to come into the house."

"Perhaps you are surprised, Gracious Princess," said Skshetuski, as they entered the room, "to see me in Rozloga; and yet I have not broken my word, for the prince is sending me to Chigrin, and still further. He commanded me to stop over in Rozloga and inquire after your welfare."

"I thank his Highness, as my gracious Lord. Does he think of sending us away soon from Rozloga?"

"He has no idea of it, for he knows no reason for sending you away, and what I told you will come true. You will remain in Rozloga; I have all I need myself."

When the princess heard this, she regained her cheerfulness and said:

"Sit down and be as happy as I am to see you."

"And is the young princess well; where is she?"

"I am well aware that you did not come to see me, Cavalier. She is well; she is indeed. The girl has grown fat upon all these love affairs. But I will call her now, and will go and change my dress; for I am ashamed to receive guests in this attire."

The princess wore a dress of colored chintz with a fur cape and calf-skin shoes.

At this moment, Helena came bounding into the room, for she had heard from the Tartar, Chekhly, who the arrival was. She ran in, out of breath, and red as a cherry. It was some moments before she recovered her breath enough to speak; but her eyes were bright with happiness and joy. Skshetuski sprang towards her to kiss her hand; and, as the old princess had discreetly left the room, he also kissed her on the mouth, for he was a passionate lover. She did not make much resistance for she felt overcome with joy.

"I did not expect you," she said softly, closing her pretty eyes, "but do not kiss me so much. It is not proper."

"How can I help kissing you," answered the knight, "for honey is not as sweet to me as your lips. I had begun to think that I should die without you before the prince sent me here."

"Then the prince knows?"

"I told him everything, and he was even delighted, and remembered Prince Vasil. Ah! You naughty girl! you must have bewitched me, for I see nothing but you in the whole world."

"Your blindness is a divine favor for me."

"Do you still remember the omen that the falcon gave us when he dragged our hands together? It was a prophecy."

"I remember it well."

"When, out of sheer longing, I walked from Lubni to the Solonits, I saw you there plainly as if you were standing before me, but when I stretched out my hand, you disappeared.

But now, you shall not escape me any more; for I think that nothing can any longer stand in our way."

"If anything stands in our way, it will not be my fault."

"Tell me once again that you love me."

Helena cast down her eyes, but said earnestly and gravely: "As no one else in the world."

"If any one would load me with gold and high honors, I would count it as nothing against your word; for I feel that you are speaking the truth, although I do not know how I have deserved such great favor from you."

"You had compassion on me; you protected me; you took my part, and talked to me as I had never been spoken to before."

Helena paused from emotion, and the lieutenant began afresh to kiss her hands.

"You shall be my ruler, as well as my wife."

They were silent awhile. He could not take his eyes off her, as though he would compensate himself for his long absence. She appeared to him more beautiful than before. In fact, in this dim light, in the play of the sunbeams, which painted rainbow colors on the window-panes, she looked like one of those pictures of the Holy Virgin in the twilight of a side chapel. And at the same time, so much warmth and life seemed to radiate from her, and so much delightful womanly and witchery was painted in her face and in her whole being, that one might lose his head and love her till death, and forever!

"I shall yet be blinded by your beauty," said the lieutenant."

The little white teeth of the young princess gleamed in a joyous smile.

"Panna Anna Borzobahata is sure a hundred times more beautiful than I."

"You and she are as much alike as the moon's disk to a tin platter."

"Jendzian told me differently."

"Jendzian deserves a punch in the mouth. What do I care for that young lady: let other bees draw honey from that flower; there is no lack of bees there."

Further conversation was interrupted by the entrance of old Chekhly who came to salute the lieutenant. He looked upon him already as his future master, and therefore, he bowed low on the threshold and made him a salaam in Oriental fashion.

"Well, old Chekhly, I will take you along with the young lady. You are willing to serve her until your death?"

"It will not be long before that time comes; but as long as I live, I will remain in her service; the one God knows it."

"In a month's time, when I return from Sich, we will go to Lubni," said the lieutenant, turning to Helena. "Father Mukhovietski is waiting for us at the altar."

Helena exclaimed in a terrified voice:

"Are you going to Sich?"

"The prince is sending me there with letters; but fear nothing, the person of an ambassador is sacred, even to the heathen. I would have preferred to have taken you and the princess at once, believe me, but the roads are so dreadful. I saw myself that it was hardly possible even for the horses to travel."

"Are you going to stay long in Rozloga?"

"This evening I am going to Chigrin, and the sooner I take leave, the sooner I will see you again; and, besides, the prince's mission hurries me. My time is not my own, nor my will."

"I want you to take some refreshments, if you've had enough billing and cooing," said the old princess entering. "Aha! the girl has red cheeks; you did not waste time, cavalier! Well, I do not wonder!" Then she gave Helena a friendly slap on the shoulder and they went in together to luncheon. The princess was in an excellent humor. She had long ceased to feel worried about Bohun, and now, thanks to the generosity of the lieutenant, things had been so arranged that Rozloga with its forests, fields and inhabitants, could be considered absolutely as her property and that of her sons. And they were not insignificant possessions.

The lieutenant inquired after the princes; if they would soon return.

"I await them daily. At first they were angry with you; but then, after they appreciated your behavior, they began to love you as a future relation; for they thought that it was not easy to find a cavalier of your character in the present degenerate times."

As soon as luncheon was over, the lieutenant and Helena went into the cherry orchard which reached to the moat beyond the courtyard. The garden was white with blossoms like snow, while behind it rose an oak forest, in which a cuckoo was calling.

"That is a happy omen," said Skshetuski, "but we must question him.

And turning to the oak wood, he asked:

"Poor little cuckoo, tell me how many years I shall live in union with this young lady?"

The cuckoo began to call again and again; they counted fifty and more.

"God grant it may be so."

"The cuckoo always tells the truth," said Helena.

"If that is so, I will ask him another question," said the lieutenant gaily.

And he asked:

"Tell me, poor little cuckoo, how many boys shall we have?"

As if he knew all about it, the cuckoo immediately began to answer and called neither more or less than twelve times.

Skshetuski was beside himself with joy.

"Oh! as I love God, I shall become a starosta! Did you hear him, lady, eh?"

"I heard nothing at all," answered Helena, getting red as a cherry. "I do not even know what you asked him."

"Shall I repeat it?"

"That is not necessary."

With such chatter and pastime the day passed like a dream, and with evening came a moment of lingering, touching farewell, then the lieutenant started for Chigrin.

LISTENING TO THE CUCKOO.

CHAPTER VIII.

In Chigrin, Skshetuski found old Zatsvilikhovski in a state of the greatest feverish excitement. He was awaiting impatiently the prince's messenger; for theatening news was coming daily from Sich. He had no longer any doubt that Khymelnitski was ready to take up arms to avenge his wrongs, and to try and regain the old privileges of the Cossacks. Zatsvilikhovski had received news that he had been in the Crimea and had implored the Khan for some Tartar troops, with which he expected to arrive any day in Sich. Consequently a general expedition was expected to set out from Sich for the Commonwealth which, with the help of the Tartars, might prove destructive. The approaching storm was perceived each day drawing ever nearer, ever more distinct, ever more terrible. It was no longer gloomy, uncertain fear, that spread over the Ukraine; it was the certainty of a war and of carnage. The Grand Hetman, who at first, had not attached much importance to the whole affair, drew nearer with his forces to Cherkass. The advance posts of the king's army reached as far as Chigrin, mainly that they might prevent the defection of any regiments; for the Cossacks and the inhabitants of the towns began to fly in crowds to Sich. The nobility collected in the towns. It was said that in the southern principalities, the militia would be mustered. Many, without waiting for orders, sent their wives and children to fortresses, and themselves went to Cherkass. The unhappy Ukraine was divided in two halves, the inhabitants of one-half swarmed to Sich; the others into the royal camp. One party held to the conservative order of things, the other desired the wildest freedom; one side strove to maintain the fruits of centuries of toil, the other wished to steal these possessions from them. Both would, ere long, stain their hands in the blood of their brethren. The dreadful feud resolved itself into a social war before it had taken up the religious war cries that were absolutely foreign to Nij.

But, although heavy clouds gathered on the horizon of the Ukraine, although everything seemed wrapped in fatal darkness; although discord worked and fermented inwardly, and thunder rolled from one end to the other, men did not yet realize what havoc the storm would cause. Perhaps Khymelnitski himself did not realize it, for he sent, in the interim, letters to the nobles of Cracow; to the Cossack commissioners and to the commander of the king's forces full of complaints as well as of assurances of loyalty to Vladislav, the Fourth, and the Commonwealth. Was he seeking to gain time? or did he believe that negotiations might yet hinder the outbreak? There were different opinions about it—two men only were not deceived for a moment. These were Zatsvilikhovski and old Barabash.

The old colonel had also just received a letter from Khmyelnitski, full of scorn, full of threats, and insults. "With the whole army of the Zaporojians," wrote Khmyelnitski, "I pray and beseech that those privileges be restored which Your Grace has confiscated; and because you have kept them back for your own advantage and profit, the whole army of Zaporojians consider you worthy to rule sheep or swine, but not men. I, however, ask Your Grace's pardon if, in any particular I failed in courtesy in my poor house at Chigrin on St. Nicholas' day—and because I rode away without permission to Zaporoj."

"See, worthy Sirs," said Barabash, to Zatsvilikhovski and Skshetuski, "see how he insults me, and it was I who taught him the art of war, and was as quite a father to him."

"So he announces that he will demand his rights with the whole army of Zaporojians at his back," said Zatsvilikhovski, "that is in fact a civil war, the most dreadful of all wars."

"I see I must hasten; give me, good Sirs, the letters to those with whom I must confer," said Skshetuski. "Have you one to the Koshov Ataman?"

"Yes, from the prince himself."

"Well, then, I will give you one to the commander-in-chief, and you, Colonel Barabash, have also a relation there by the name of Barabash; from him, you can find out all you want to know. But who knows if it is not already too late for such an expedition. Does the prince want to know what is really going on there? The answer is simple; crooked dealing is going on. And if he wishes to know what is best to be done, the advice is short: Gather together as many soldiers as possible and join forces with the Hetman."

"Well, despatch at once a messenger to the prince with the answer and with the advice," said Skshetuski. "I must go to Sich for I was sent there and cannot change the will of the prince."

And do you know that it is a frightfully dangerous journey?" said Zatsvilikhovski. "The people here are already so excited that one hardly dares to remain here. If the king's forces were not near, the people would throw themselves upon us, and there—you are running into the jaws of the dragon."

"Lieutenant, Jonah was in the belly of the great fish, not only in his jaws; but with God's help, he came out whole."

"Well, then, travel on, I admire your determination. You can ride safely as far as Kudak, but there you must look round you, and see what is best to do. Grodzitski is an old soldier; he will give you the best instructions, and I myself will go to the prince; if I have to fight in my old age, I would rather fight under him than any other man. Meanwhile, I will prepare a boat and a boatman for you who will take you to Kudak."

Skshetuski went out and betook himself speedily to his quarters on the market-place, in the house of the prince, in order to make his final prepartions. In spite of the dangers of the journey, of which Zatsvilikhovski had told him, the lieutenant could not think of it without a certain satisfaction. He would see the Dnieper in its whole length, as far as Nij and Porog, which for the knights of those days was a land full of enchantment and of mysterious adventure, that which attracted every enterprising spirit. Many a man had passed his whole life in the Ukraine, and could not boast that he had seen Sich; Skshetuski felt therefore as if he had joined the brotherhood and not many of the nobility ventured to do that at this time. The days of Lamka Zboroski were past and would never return. The enmity between Sich and the Commonwealth which had arisen in the time of Nalevayka and Pavluk had never ceased but had increased every year; and the influx of the nobility, Poles as well as Russians, to Sich, people who resembled the Nijovs both in language and in faith, had become much smaller. Men like Bulyhov Kurtzevich had not many imitators. What now impelled the nobles to seek brotherhood in Nij was chiefly misfortune, banishment; in one word, crimes that could not be pardoned. Therefore, an impenetrable secrecy, dense as the mist over

the Dnieper, covered the robber land of Nij. Wonders were told of it, and Skshetuski was curious to see it with his own eyes.

He did not surmise (what is true) that he would be detained there. An ambassador was an ambassador, especially when he came from Prince Yeremy.

These thoughts filled his mind as he looked out of the window of his quarters upon the market-place. Thus he passed hour after hour when it suddenly seemed to him that he saw two well-known figures going directly towards the alley where the Wallachian Dopula had his shop.

He looked more closely; it was Zagloba and Bohun. They walked arm in arm, and disappeared behind the dark door above which hung a sign, showing that it was a drinking place.

The lieutenant was astonished, both at the presence of Bohun in Chigrin and also at his friendship with Zagloba.

"Jendzian, come here," he called to his servant. The boy appeared in the doorway of the adjoining room.

"See here, Jendzian, go into the wineshop with the sign on it, over there. You will see there a fat nobleman with a hole in his forehead; tell him that somebody wishes to see him about a matter of great importance. If he asks who it is, however, do not tell."

Jendzian hastened away, and in a few minutes the lieutenant saw him returning, with Zagloba.

"Well, met," said Skshetuski, as the nobleman appeared at the door of the room. "Have you forgotten me?"

"Forgotten you! May the Tartars melt me down to tallow and make candles out of me for their mosques if I have forgotten you. Only a few months ago, you and Chaplinski opened the door at Dopula's which I was very glad to see; because I had escaped from prison in Stambul in the same manner. And what is Pan Podbipyenta, Povsinoga of the coat-of-arms Torn-breeches doing now, with his innocence and his sword? Are the sparrows still perching on his head, mistaking him for a withered tree?

"Pan Podbipyenta is well and sends you his regards."

"He is a very rich nobleman, but frightfully stupid; if he should cut off three such heads as his own, they would only amount to one and a-half. Phew! how warm it is, although it is only March. One's tongue cleaves to the palate."

"I have an excellent brand. Take a glass."

"A fool refuses when a wise man offers. The army barber-surgeon has just advised me to drink mead, to drive melancholy from my brain. For bad times are coming to the nobility,—days of wrath and calamity. Chaplinski has perished from fear; he no longer comes to Dopula's because the Cossack veterans drink here. I alone cary a brave front and am good friends with several officers, although the command stinks of tar. The mead is good, excellent! Where did you get it?"

"In Lubni. Are there many veterans here?"

"Who is not here? Fedor Yokubovich is here, the veteran Philon Dzyedziala, Daniel Nechay and with them the eye in their head, Bohun, who has been my friend since the time when I drank with him till he fell under the table; when I promised him that I would adopt him. Chigrin stinks of them while waiting to see which side they shall take; for they do not dare to go over openly to Khmyelnitski. If they do not do it, it will be due to me."

"How's that?"

"When I drink with them, I entice them over to the Commonwealth and persuade them to be faithful. If the King does not give me a starostship for that, then there is no justice left in the Commonwealth; no reward for services; and it would be truly better to hide behind the stove than to sacrifice one's head *pro bono publico.*"

"You would do better to sacrifice your head in fighting against them; it seems to me that you are throwing away your money. You will not gain them this way."

"I, throw my money away? What do you take me for? Is it not enough that I associate with fools without paying for them too. I consider it a favor when I allow them to pay for me."

"And Bohun, what is he doing here?"

"He? He listens to hear what is being said about Sich just like the rest. That is why he came here. He is the spoiled darling of all the Cossacks. They flatter him like monkeys. One thing is sure; the regiment of Pereyaslav follows him, and not Loboda. And who knows whom Kshechovski's troops will follow. Bohun is on intimate terms with the Nijovs when he fights with the Turks or the Tartars; but now he is making other calculations, for he confessed to me, when we were carousing, that he loves a noblewoman and is going to marry her. That is why it does not suit him just

before his marriage to be on too friendly a footing with the peasants. That is why he wishes me to adopt him and to bring him into the nobility. Your wine is excellent!"

"Take some more, do!"

"I will! I will! one does not find such a brand at ordinary inns."

"Did you not ask what the young lady's name was whom Bohun wishes to marry."

"Good sir, what do I care about her name. I only know that when I put horns on Bohun's head, she will be the doe."

The lieutenant could scarce restrain himself from giving Zagloba a blow in the mouth with his fist; the latter, however, noticed nothing, and continued speaking:

"In my young days, I was a great lady killer. Shall I tell you how I came to receive the palm in Galatz? Do you see this hole in my forehead? Enough, if I tell you that it was made by the eunuchs in the seraglio of a pasha there."

"You told me it was made by the bullet of a robber."

"Did I say that? Well, I was right. Every Turk is a robber, so help me God."

There conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Zatsvilikhovski:

"Well, lieutenant," said the old standard-bearer. "The boats are ready. The boatmen are trusty people. Get away in God's name, and at once. Here are the letters."

"I will give my orders for my men to go to the shore at once."

"And where are you going?" asked Zagloba.

"To Kudak."

"It will be pretty warm for you there."

But the lieutenant did not hear the prophecy, for he had left the room and stepped out in the market-place, where his men were standing by their horses ready to start.

"To horse and down the river," commanded Skshetuski. "Get the horses on board and wait for me!"

Meanwhile the old standard-bearer was saying to Zagloba:

"I hear that you are now making up to the Cossack officers and drinking with them."

"*Pro bono publico,* Lieutenant."

"You have a versatile genius, and truly more wit than sense of shame. You wish to bind the Cossacks to you in their cups in order that they may be your friends in case of war."

"And If I, the martyr of the Turks, have no wish to become a martyr of the Cossacks, it would not be strange; for two mushrooms spoil the best larshch,[1] and as for the feeling of shame, I invite no one to drink with me—I enjoy it alone and God grant that it tastes no worse than this mead. Merit like oil, must always rise to the top."

At this moment Skshetuski returned.

"The men are already gone," said he.

Zatsvilikhovski poured out some wine.

"Here's to a happy journey," he said.

"And a safe return," added Zagloba.

"You will have a pleasant voyage; for the water is remarkably high."

"Sit down, good sir, let us drink the rest, the tankard is not large."

They sat down and drank.

"You will see a remarkable country," said Zatsvilikhovski, "and greet Pan Grodzitski in Kudak! Ah, what a soldier that is! He lives at the end of the world, far away from the eyes of the hetman and yet maintains perfect order—would to God it was so in the whole Commonwealth. I know Kudak and the Porog. In the old times, I often went there and it makes me sad at heart to think that has all passed, disappeared, and now. . . . "

The ensign here leaned his milk-white head upon his hand and fell into deep thought. There was silence. One heard only the stamping of the horses' hoofs in the yard, for the last of Skshetuski's men had ridden to the river, to go on board the boat.

"Good God," said Zatsvilikhovski, rousing himself from his reverie, "and yet there used to be better times, even when there was fighting. I remember it as if it were to-day, but it is twenty-seven years ago that we were at Khotsim as the hussars under Lubomirski went to attack the janissaries. The Cossacks, behind their earthworks, threw their caps up in the air and cried to Sahaydach so that the ground trembled under their feet, 'We will go to death with the Poles!' and to-day—Nij, which ought to be the bulwark of Christianity lets the Tartars into the boundaries of the Commonwealth only in order to attack them when they are on their return home with booty. To-day it is worse; to-day Khmyelnitski

[1] A sour Polish soup.

unites with the Tartars, and, together with them, will murder the Christians. . . . "

"Let us drink to these sorrows," interrupted Zagloba, "this is an excellent brand."

"God give me a speedy death that I may not see the civil war," continued the old ensign, "the universal sin shall be washed clean in blood, but it will not be the blood of redemption; for here, brother will put brother to death. Who are the inhabitants of Nij?" Russians! And who those in the army of Prince Yeremy? And those in the service of the lords? Russians! And how many of them are there in the royal camp? And I myself—what am I? Oh, unhappy Ukraine! the heathens of the Crimea will place chains on thy neck; in the Turkish galleys thou wilt row!"

"Do not mourn so, ensign," said Skshetuski, "or our eyes will overflow. Perhaps we may yet have bright sunshine."

The sun just went down and its last beams fell with a ruddy glow on the white hair of the ensign. In the town, the bells were ringing for the Angelus.

They went out. Skshetuski went into the Roman Catholic church; Zatsvilikhovski to the Greek church, and Zagloba to Dopula's in the Bell corner. It was already dark when they met again on the shore of the Tasmania. Skshetuski's people were already sitting in the boats. The men still carrying things on board. A cold wind came from the mouth of the Dnieper near by and the night did not look promising. In the reflection of the fire that burned on the shore, the water appeared blood-red, and seemed to flow past with extraordinary swiftness towards an unknown darkness.

"Well, a happy journey!" said the ensign and shook the young man's hand heartily. "Be on your guard!"

"I will omit nothing. With God's help, we shall soon see each other again."

"Certainly, in Lubni, or in the Prince's camp."

"Then you are positively going to the prince?"

Zatsvilikhovski raised his hands in the air.

"What else can I do? if there is war, well then, let it come!"

"Farewell, ensign."

"God be with you."

"*Vive valeque*" cried Zagloba, "and if the water doesn't take you to Stambul, you must take the Sultan to task. Or drive a knot in his head! That was an excellent wine. Brr! how cold it is!"

"Good-bye."

"Hope to see you soon again."

"God guide you!"

The oars creaked and splashed in the water. The boats floated away. The fire that burned on the shore was soon lost in the distance. For a long time, Skshetuski watched the noble form of the ensign, lighted up by the reflection from the fire, and a sudden sadness took possession of his heart. The water was bearing him away, far from the hearts of his friends, and of his beloved; far from a known country, carrying him away mercilessly, like fate, into a wild region; into the dark future.

The boat followed the course of the river till united with the Dnieper. The wind whistled; the oars plashed monotonously and sadly; the sailors began to sing:

"O ye banks, O ye waves,
With mist and clouds o'erspread. . . "

Skshetuski wrapped himself in his woolen cloak and lay down on the pallet which his soldiers had prepared for him. His thoughts were about Helena, that so far she was not in Lubni, that Bohun remained and he was departing. Fear, presentiments, care gnawed his heart like crows. He tried to put them away from him till he was tired, and his thoughts grew confused and blended weirdly with the sounds of the wind, the splash of the oars and the songs of the boatmen, and he fell asleep.

CHAPTER IX.

The following morning Skshetuski arose fresh and bright, and in a happy mood. The weather was glorious. The waters wide expanse were wrinkled by the light warm wind.

The shores were enveloped in mist and blended in the surface of the water in a boundless plain. Jendzian was fairly frightened when he awoke, and rubbed his eyes to see more clearly. He looked about him in astonishment and, as he could see no sign of the shore, he cried:

"Great God! my master, are we already at sea?"

"The river is swollen but it is not the sea," answered Skshetuski, "and you will see the shore as the mist clears away."

"I think we shall soon see the Turkish territory."

"That we shall if we are ordered there. But you see we are not rowing alone."

In fact as far as the eye could see, were several baydaks, dombzes, or tumbases,[1] and narrow black Cossack canoes, made of woven reeds, and were usually called caiques. A few of these canoes were floating down the river, carried by the strong current; others were working their way bravely against the stream, assisted by oars and sails. They were taking fish, wax, salt, and dry cherries into the towns on the shore, or they were coming back from the towns, laden with provisions for Kudak, and with wares which in the bazaars in Sich found a ready sale. The banks of the Dnieper, from the mouth of the Pshol on were a perfect desert only here and there whitened by the Cossack winter quarters. But the river formed a highway which connected Sich with the rest of the world; and hence, the traffic was pretty considerable, especially when the increase in the volume of water made it easier for the sailing craft; when even the Porog beyond Nyenashyts was navigable for boats sailing with the stream.

[1] Boats.

The lieutenant observed with curiosity this life upon the river as his boats floated swiftly towards Kudak. The mist had cleared; the shores were distinctly visible; above the heads of the travellers circled millions of aquatic birds, pelicans, wild geese, cranes, ducks, plover, curlew, and tern; from the reeds on the bank, there came a gabble, the bubbling of water and the rustling of wings; that it seemed as if the birds were holding a diet, or were undertaking a bird-war.

Behind Kremenchuk the banks grew lower and more open.

"Look there!" cried Jendzian, suddenly, "there is the sun and there lies snow on the fields."

Skshetuski looked where he pointed. Truly, as far as the eye could see, gleamed a white covering in the sunlight on both sides of the river.

"Hallo! old man, what is that white that shines over there?" asked the lieutenant.

"Cherries, sir," answered the old man.

In fact both banks of the river beyond the mouth of the Pshol were overgrown for quite a distance with forests of dwarf cherry trees. The sweet, luscious fruit afforded nourishment in spring to birds, animals, and to men who had lost their way in the desert; and they also formed an article of commerce which was carried in boats to Kiev and farther. At this time the trees were full of blossoms and when they approached the shore in order to rest the oarsmen, the lieutenant and Jendzian went ashore to look more closely at these woods. A powerful perfume filled the air so that they could hardly breathe. A mass of white blossoms lay on the ground. In many places, the little trees formed an impenetrable thicket. Between them grew luxuriant wild, dwarf almond-trees which were covered with pink blossoms, that emitted a still more powerful fragrance. Millions of bumblebees, honey-bees and variegated butterflies flew in and out in this sea of blossoms, which extended farther than the eye could reach.

"Wonderful, sir, wonderful," said Jendrian, "and why does nobody live here? There is plenty of game about, I see."

Indeed, in among the cherry trees, darted grey and white hares, and numberless flocks of falcon and quail, several of which Jendzian killed with his gun; but he learned to his sorrow, from the old sailor, that their flesh was poisonous. In the soft earth, might be seen tracks of deer and antelope, and from the distance came sounds like the grunting of wild-boar.

After the voyagers had taken in this wonderful sight and rested awhile, they continued their journey. The banks rose higher, then became level, disclosing to the view beautiful meadows, woods, groves, hills, and extensive steppes. The neighborhood was so entrancing that Skshetuski involuntarily repeated to himself Jendzian's question: "Why does no-one live here?" But it would be necessary for a second Yeremy Vishnyovyetski to take possession of this wilderness; to organize it and protect it against the attacks of the Tartars and of the Nijovs. In many places, the river formed lagoons, curves, swampy thickets, beat with foaming waves upon the rocks by the shore, and filled the dark rocky clefts with water. In such hollows and crevices the Cossacks used to hide their treasures and conceal themselves. The mouths of the rivers, which were covered with a perfect forest of reeds, moss, and rushes, were black with swarms of birds; in one word, it was a wild world, desolate and mysterious, which spread itself before the eyes of our voyagers.

The sailing was wearisome, for, as the weather was warm, swarms of poisonous mosquitoes and various insects, unknown on the barren steppes, annoyed our travellers. Many of them were as thick as a finger, and their bite caused the blood to flow freely.

Towards evening, they arrived at the island of Romanov, the fires of which they had seen from afar, and they put up here for the night. The fishermen who had crowded to the spot in order to see the escort of the lieutenant had their shirts, faces, and hands completely smeared with tar, as a protection against bites. They were rough men of coarse manners. In the spring they came in crowds to catch fish which they smoked, and then took to Chigrin, Cherkass, Pereyaslav and Kiev. Their labor was hard but remunerative on account of the immense numbers of fish, which, in summer were actually a pest to this neighborhood, for, on account of the drying up of the water in the lagoons and in the so-called "quiet corners" they died and poisoned the air.

The lieutenant learned from the fishermen that all the Nijovs who were engaged here in catching fish had left the island a few days before and had gone to Nij at the call of Koshov Ataman. All night long one could see from the island the fires which the refugees on their way to Sich, lighted in the steppes. The fishermen knew that an expedition against the Poles was being arranged, and made no

secret of it before the lieutenant. Skshetuski now saw that his expedition had been delayed a little too long; the regiments of the Cossacks would have already marched north before he could reach Sich but he had received the command to go and therefore, as a true soldier, he did not hesitate, but resolved, if necessary, to force his way even into the camps of the Zaporojians.

On the following day, early in the morning, they continued their journey. They rounded the wonderful Taren Rog, the Sukha Gora and the Konski Ostrog which was celebrated for its bogs and for the quantity of snakes that were found there, rendering it unfit for human habitation. Every thing, the wildness of the scenery and the increasing swiftness of the stream announced the vicinity of Porog. Finally the tower of Kudak appeared in sight; the first part of the journey was ended.

The lieutenant could not however enter the castle that evening, for Pan Grodzitski had commanded that after the bugle blew for roll-call no one should be allowed to leave or enter the castle; should the king himself seek entrance he would be obliged to stay over night in Slobotka which adjoined the ramparts of the fortification. The lieutenant did likewise. His quarters were not exactly comfortable; for the cabins in Slobotka, of which there were about sixty, were made of clay and were so small that in many of them one could only enter by going on all fours. It did not pay to build better ones, for at each invasion of the Tartars the garrison reduced everything to ashes, and they did this that their assailants might find no shelter or hiding-place in the neighborhood. In this hamlet of Slobotka lived "foreigners" i. e., adventurers who came hither from Poland, Russia, the Crimea, and from Wallachia. Each one belonged to a different faith, but that made no difference to anyone. The ground was not cultivated on account of the danger, which was threatened by the Tartars. The inhabitants lived on fish, and wheat brought from the Ukraine; they drank palanka made from millet, and occupied themselves with mechanical work that was valued in the fort.

The lieutenant could not close an eye on account of the intolerable smell of horses' hides, from which they made straps in Slobotka. The following morning before daybreak after the reveille had sounded, he sent word to the fort that an ambassador from the prince had arrived and requested an

audience. Grodzitski, whose remembrance of the prince's visit was still fresh, went out himself to meet him. He was a man of about fifty, with one eye like a Cyclops, gloomy, for as he lived at the end of the world in the wilderness, and saw no one, he had become somewhat savage, and as he had unlimited power in his hands he had taken on an earnest and severe expression. His face was besides disfigured by pockmarks and sword-cuts, and wounds from Tartar arrows, which gave a variegated appearance of white spots on the darker skin. He was however a brave soldier and watchful as a stork. He kept his eyes continually fixed in the direction from which the Tartars and the Cossacks would come. He drank only water and slept but seven hours a day; frequently at night he would spring from his couch to see if the sentries on the ramparts were keeping their watch and he punished the slightest dereliction of duty on the part of the soldiers with frightful severity. But he was kind towards the Cossacks although he was feared; in this manner he had gained their respect. When there was scarcity of food in Sich he supplied the inhabitants with grain. He was a Russian of the stock of those who, years before had gone into the steppes with Pshetslav, Landskoronski and Samka Zborovski.

"So you are going to Sich?" he asked Skshetuski, after he had taken him into the castle, and welcomed him hospitably.

"That is what I am going to do. What news have you from there?"

"War! The Koshov Ataman has called the Cossacks from all the caves, rivers, and islands. Fugitives are coming from the Ukraine, and I am trying to stop them, as well as I can. There are over thirty thousand men gathered together; and if they go to the Ukraine and there gather to them the Cossacks from the small towns, and the peasantry, they will number a hundred thousand men."

"And Khmyelnitski?"

"He is daily expected from the Crimea with the Tartars; perhaps he has already returned. To tell the truth your journey to Sich is waste of time for you may expect them here shortly; for that they will come through Kudak and that they will not leave it standing after them is certain."

"And will you defend yourself, sir?"

Grodzitski looked at the lieutenant darkly and said calmly and emphatically:

"I will not defend myself. . ."

"What?"

"I have no powder. I sent more than twenty canoes with requests for some, but I have received none. I do not know if they have any themselves—I only know that they have so far sent me none. My supply will last two weeks—no longer. If I had enough, I would blow up Kudak and myself rather than that one foot of a Cossack should enter here. I have been commanded to remain here—I remain; I have been commanded to watch—I watch; I have been commanded to show my teeth—I have shown them, and should death come—we are born but once—I know how to die."

"And could you not make powder yourselves?"

"For two months the Zaporojians have sent me no saltpetre, for it has to be brought from the Black Sea. It is all the same to me. I will await death!"

"We might learn something from you old soldiers. And could you not go for powder yourself?"

"My good sir, I would not leave Kudak and I can't leave. I have lived here; I will die here; and don't think that you have fine banquets and splendid receptions in store for you after the manner in which ambassadors are received elsewhere, or that your ambassadorial dignity will be any protection to you. Why, they kill their own atamans. Long as I have been here, I cannot remember that one of them has died a natural death. You, too, are going to your death."

Skshetuski was silent.

"I see that your courage is growing weak; then do not go."

"Commandant," said Skshetuski angrily, "think of something better with which to frighten me; for what you have told me I have already heard ten times, and if you advise me not to continue my journey, I see that it is because you would not go were you in my place—perhaps, too, it is not only powder but courage that prevents you from defending Kudak."

Grodzitski did not seem annoyed, on the contrary, he looked with clear eyes at Skshetuski.

"A biting pike," he growled in Russian. "Pardon me, sir, I see from your reply that you can maintain the dignity of the prince and of the nobility. I will therefore give you a couple of caiques, for you cannot sail, the Porog on boats."

"That is what I come here to ask for."

"At Nyenashyts you must drag them over the ground for even when the river is high, one can never get through there;

even the smallest canoe hardly dares venture; and if the water is low, be on your guard, and remember that iron and lead are more trustworthy than words. Brave men alone are prized there. The caiques will be ready to-morrow. I will have double rudders brought, for single oars are not enough on the Porog."

Then Grodzitski led the lieutenant out of the room in order to show him the fort and its arrangements. Everywhere exemplary order and discipline reigned. The sentries watched day and night on the ramparts, which the Tartar prisoners were unceasingly mending and fortifying.

"Each year I add a yard to the height of the rampart," said Grodzitski, "and it is already so high that if I only had enough powder, they could do us no harm with a hundred thousand men: But without ammunition I cannot defend myself if I am outnumbered."

The fortifications, in truth. was impregnable, for besides the cannon, the high banks of the Dnieper and the inaccessible rocks, which rose perpendicularly up out of the water, protected it. It did not even need a large garrison. There were in fact not more than six hundred men in the fort, but they were picked troops, armed with muskets and guns. The Dnieper at this spot flowed in a small channel and was so narrow, that an arrow let fly from the ramparts flew far away across the other shore. The cannon of the castle commanded both shores and the whole country around. Besides that, half a mile from the castle stood a high tower, from which one could see for a radius of eight miles. In this tower, were one hundred soldiers, whom Pan Grodzitski daily inspected. If they saw any sign of men in the neighborhood, thy sent word immediately to the fort; the bells were rung and the whole garrison immediately took up arms.

"Hardly a week passes," said Grodzitski, "without an alarm; for the Tartars come frequently like wolves, in packs of several thousand at a time; we cover them with the cannon as well as we can, but sometimes the sentries take the herds of wild horses for Tartars."

"And is it not most disagreeable to live in such a desert?" asked Skshetuski.

"If I was offered a place in the king's chambers I would rather remain here. I see more of the world from this spot than the king sees from his window in Warsaw."

It was really a fact. From the ramparts one looked down

on an immense surface of steppes, which at the present moment looked like a sea of green; towards the north, one saw the mouth of the River Samara; towards the south, the whole course of the Dnieper, with its rocks, precipices, and forests as far as the foaming waves of the second rapid at Sursk.

Towards evening they again visited the tower; for Skshetuski, who now saw for the first time this out-of-the-way fortification in the steppes, was curious to see everything. Meanwhile, the caiques had been got ready for him in Slobotka and had been provided with rudders at both ends which made them easier to handle. The following day, in the early morning, he was to take his departure; but he hardly took any rest this night for he thought over what he should do in the face of the inevitable destruction which threatened him, in consequence of his embassy to that terrible Sich. Life was dear to him, for he was young and in love, and he wanted to live beside his loved one; but honor and fame were more to him than life. Then he realized that war was at hand, that Helena, who was expecting him in Rozloga, was surrounded by terrible dangers, that she might be given over, not to Bohun's violence alone, but to that of the wild, unrestrained multitude, and sorrow and pain took possession of his soul. The steppes must now be dry; one could certainly travel from Rozloga to Lubni. Meanwhile he had asked Helena and the princess to wait for his return, for he could not surmise that the storm would so soon break; he did not know that the journey to Sich was so dangerous. He paced up and down the room with quick steps, tugged at his beard and rung his hands. What should he do, how manage! In his mind's eye, he saw Rozloga in flames surrounded by a black howling mob more like devils than human beings. He heard the echo of his own steps which resounded through the vaults of the castle; but to him it seemed as if he heard evil powers who were surrounding Helena. Upon the ramparts, the bugle sounded for curfew, and it seemed to him like the sound of Bohun's horn, and he ground his teeth and clutched convulsively at his sword. Ah! why had he forced himself into this expedition instead of leaving it to Bikhovyets?"

Jendzian, as he lay on the threshold, noticed his master's unrest; he rose therefore, rubbed his eyes, lighted the torches, which had been stuck in iron and walked about the room and tried to attract his master's attention.

But the lieutenant was completely lost in his painful

thoughts and continued to pace up and down, waking the slumbering echoes with his steps.

"Master? Hey, master!" said Jendzian.

Skshetuski looked at him with glassy eyes. At length he awoke from his reflections.

"Jendzian, do you fear death?" he asked.

"Who? How? What do you say, sir."

"Whoever goes to Sich, never returns."

"And why do you go, sir?"

"I wanted to go, never mind about that; but I am sorry for you; you are a child, and though you are a rogue, you will not escape with all your cunning. Go back to Chigrin and then to Lubni."

Jendzian scratched his head.

"Certainly I fear death, master, for who does not fear death, does not fear God. It is His Will that we live or die; but if you go voluntarily to death, it will be your sin and not mine, for you are the master and I the servant. I will not leave you on that account, for I am not a peasant of no family, but a noble; and even if I am poor, I am not without a sense of honor."

"Oh! I knew that you were a good fellow, but I want to tell you that if you will not go of your own accord to Lubni you must do it at my command; for it cannot be otherwise."

"If you were to kill me, I would not go. What do you think? That I am a Judas, or that I would betray you to death?"

Jendzian here covered his face with his hands and began to cry aloud. Skshetuski saw that he could do nothing with him in this way, and he did not want to treat him too harshly, for he was sorry for the boy.

"Listen," he said, "you cannot be of any assistance to me and you may depend upon it that I will not voluntarily give up my life. But you will take some letters for me to Rozloga, to those whom I love better than my life. You will say to the princess and to the princes that they shall immediately, without the slightest delay, take the young lady to Lubni; otherwise, the rebellion will take them unawares—and see that they do it. I am intrusting you with an important mission, one worthy of a friend, not of a servant."

"Well, then, send some one else; any one can carry a letter."

"And whom have I here that I can trust? Are you mad? I repeat, if you were to save my life twice over, you could not

render me such a service as this. For I live in torment when I think what may happen, and my skin is wet with perspiration."

"Oh, God! I see I must go, although it makes me so sad that even this bright sash would not comfort me if your lordship should give it to me."

"You shall have the sash, but attend to the matter properly."

"I do not care for the sash. Permit me only to go with you."

"To-morrow, you will return with the caique, which Commandant Grodzitski is sending to Chigrin, without delay and without resting; you will go straight to Rozloga. Do not tell the princes nor the young lady anything about what threatens me; only beg that they will immediately go on horseback to Lubni, if necessary even without taking any baggage. Here is a money-belt for you for the journey. I will soon have the letters written.

Jendzian threw himself at Skshetuski's feet.

"Master, shall I see you no more?"

"As God wills; as God wills!" replied the lieutenant, and lifted him up. "But at Rozloga you must look cheerful. Now go to sleep."

The rest of the night was spent by Skshetuski in writing letters and in fervent prayer, after which the angel of rest came to him. Meanwhile the dawn began to break and the light shone through the narrow windows. It was dawn—rosy beams stole into the room. Upon the tower and on the fort the reveille was sounding, "Get up!" Shortly after, Grodzitski appeared in the room.

"Lieutenant, the caiques are ready," he said.

"And I am ready," said Skshetuski quietly.

CHAPTER X.

The light canoes floated down the stream like swallows and bore the young knight to his fate. As the waters were very high, the rapids offered no danger. They arrived safely at Sursk-Porog and passed Lokhan; a favorable current took them through the Raven Narrows[1], at Prince and Shooter Rapids[2] the canoes grated a little but they got in safely.

Finally they saw in the distance the foaming torrent of the Nyenashyts. Here they had to go ashore and pull up their boats, and drag them over the ground; a long tedious business which usually took a whole day. Fortunately there lay along the entire bank of the river, evidently left there by previous travellers, a quantity of blocks of wood which our travellers placed under their canoes to draw them more easily. In the whole region and across the steppes, one saw not a living soul and not a canoe on the river; for no one else could go to Sich but those whom Pan Grodzitski permitted to pass through Kudak: And Grodzitski had intentionally cut off the Zaporojians from the rest of the world. The stillness was only broken by the thundering roar of the waves as they dashed on the rocks of Nyenashyts. While the men rolled the canoes along, Skshetuski observed this natural wonder. It was a frightful scene. Across the whole breadth of the river in a diagonal line, were seven rocky mounds which were raised above the water. They were black and worn in clefts by the waves which had worn holes in them that looked like gates or entrances. The stream beat with the whole force of its waters on these rocks and was thrown back by them so that it rose in its raging fury in white foaming mist, and sought to spring over them like a spirited steed. But it was thrown back again before it could find its way through the openings. It would seem as if it bit the rocks, that in impotent rage it stirred the mighty whirlpool, that it rose in columns in the air, and then, exhausted, sank down seething and bubbling, like a wild

[1] Voronova Zaporas. Kniaj and Stshelch.

beast. And then again came a noise of thunder as of a hundred cannons; a howling as of whole packs of wolves; a rasping and struggling; and at each rocky prominence this struggle was repeated with its eddying and its wild whirling of water. Above the abyss screamed birds as if they were terrified at the sight; between the clefts hovered dusky shadows that seemed like evil spirits.

Although the men who were dragging the canoes were accustomed to this sight, they crossed themselves reverently and warned the lieutenant not to go too close to the edge. For there was a saying, that if one looked too long at the rocks of Nyenashyts, he would finally see something that would make his head grow dizzy; it was also said that at times, long black hands were stretched up out of the whirlpool, and seized the unwary one who ventured too near, and that then frightful laughter would be heard in the hollow of the rocks. At night even the Zaporojians did not dare to take their canoes that way.

Among the brotherhood in Nij, no one could be received as an initiate who had not once in his life crossed the Porog alone in a canoe. But an exception was made in the case of Nyenashyts as its rocks were never covered by the water. The blind singers told about Bohun that he had ventured through Nyenashyts, but no one believed this story. The portage of the canoes took almost a whole day and the sun was setting when the lieutenant got into his boat again. But to make up for it, they sailed easily down the rest of the Porog, for it was swollen with water, and at length arrived in the quiet "Nij-water."

Upon the journey Skshetuski saw the Kuchkas (giant heap of stone) and the white stone which the prince had commanded to be raised in remembrance of his stay there, and of which Pan Boguslav Mashkievich had told him in Lubni. It was not far from here to Sich. As the lieutenant, however, did not wish to enter at dark into the labyrinth of Chertomelik, he resolved to pass the night at Khortyts.

He wished also to come across some Zaporojians and to send word before he arrived, that they might know that an ambassador, and no other, was coming. Khortyts seemed to be deserted, which somewhat surprised the lieutenant, for he had heard from Grodzitski that it always contained a Cossack garrison to repel Tartar invasions. He even undertook to go quite a distance into the country with some of his men,

to try and get some information; but he could not traverse the whole island for it was over a mile along; and a dark, threatening night was already beginning to close in on them. He returned therefore to the canoes which had been dragged up on the sand and near which, fires had been built to keep away the mosquitoes.

The greater part of the night passed quietly. The soldiers and guides had fallen asleep around the fire; only the sentries watched, and with them the lieutenant who, since his journey from Kudak, had suffered terribly from sleeplessness. He felt also that a fever was consuming him. Presently he seemed to hear steps approaching from the recesses of the island; then he thought he heard strange sounds like the distant bleating of goats. But he thought his ear must deceive him. Suddenly—it was just before dawn—a dark form stood before him.

It was a messenger from the sentry.

"Master, they're coming," he said hurriedly.

"Who?"

"Why the Nijovs; there are about forty of them!"

"Well, that is not many; wake the men; rake the fires."

The men sprang quickly to their feet. The awakened fires shot up flames in the air and lighted up the caiques and the soldiers of the lieutenant. The sentries ran up together at the same moment.

The irregular tread of men could be heard. They were halted at a certain distance. Presently a voice asked in a threatening manner:

"Who is on the shore?"

"And who are you?" replied the sentry.

"Answer, you son of an enemy, if not, I will question you with my musket."

"His Highness, the Ambassador from his Excellency, Prince Yeremy Vishnyovyetski, Koshov to the Ataman in command," answered the sergeant in a ringing voice.

The voices in the approaching crowd were silent. Apparently they were holding a brief council.

"Come here," cried the sergeant, "do not be afraid, one does not fight ambassadors, but then ambassadors do not fight!"

Footsteps again were heard approaching, and in a few minutes a few dozen forms stepped out of the darkness. By their complexion and their low stature and the furs which they

wore, skin outwards, it was evident to the lieutenant at the first glance that they were for the most part Tartars; only a few Cossacks were among them. The thought flashed through Skshetuski's mind that Khmyelnitski must have already returned from the Crimea if there were Tartars in Khortyts.

At the head of the gang, stood an old Zaporojian of gigantic stature, and savage, frightful countenance. He stepped nearer to the fire and asked:

"Who is the ambassador here?"

A strong odor of gorzalka was spread abroad. The Zaporojian was evidently drunk.

"Who is the ambassador here?" he repeated.

"I am the ambassador," said Skshetuski, proudly.

"Thou?"

"Am I your brother that you should call me 'thou?' "

"First, learn politeness, you boor," interrupted the sergeant. "You should say, Your Highness, Ambassador!"

"To destruction with you, devil's spawn! May you die like Serpyahov, Excellency's sons. What are you going to see the ataman about?"

"That is not your affair. It is sufficient for you to know that your life depends upon my reaching the ataman as quickly as possible."

At this moment another Zaporojian stepped forward from the throng.

"We are watching here at the command of the ataman," said he, "to see that none of the Poles approach and if anybody comes along, we are to bind him and bring him to the ataman, and that's what we are doing."

"You will not bind anybody who goes there of his own accord?"

"I will, for so we are commanded."

"And knowest thou, peasant, what is due to the person of an ambassador; and whom I represent?"

The old giant interrupted.

"We will lead the ambassador thither, but by the beard, look, like this!"

With these words, he reached out his hand to seize the lieutenant's beard.

But in the same moment, he screamed aloud and fell to the ground as if struck by lightning. The lieutenant had split his head open with his poleaxe.

"Fight! Fight!" howled enraged voices in the crowd. The

prince's semenovs sprang to the help of their leader. Shots were fired; the cry "Strike! Strike!" mingled with the clash of weapons. A disorderly fight commenced. In the confusion, the fires were trampled on and extinguished and they were obliged to fight in the dark. They had soon become so crowded together, that there was no room left to strike a blow; knives, fists, and teeth took the place of swords. Suddenly from the farther part of the island came new shouts and cries; assistance was coming to the assailants. In another moment they would have been too late, for the practiced soldiers had already gained the advantage over the untrained crowd.

"To the boats!" cried the lieutenant with a voice like thunder. In a moment his command was carried out. Unfortunately the canoes which had been drawn up too far on the shore, could not be pushed back into the water. Meanwhile the enemy started wildly for the shore.

"Fire!" commanded Skshetuski. A salvo of bullets brought the assailants immediately to a halt. They became confused and drew back in disorder; some of them remained lying on the sand, many of these were writhing convulsively, and looked like fish that had been drawn from the water and thrown on the shore.

The boatmen, assisted by some of the soldiers of the escort, set the oars against the ground and exerted their utmost strength to push the boats into the water, but as the rudder was fast in the ground, it was too late.

The enemy began the attack from a distance; the plashing of bullets in the water mingled with the swish of arrows, and with the groans of the wounded.

The Tartars cried out ever more imploringly to Allah and tried to cheer up each other. They were answered by the cry of the Cossack, "Fight! Fight!" and the quiet voice of Skshetuski repeating more frequently the command "Fire!"

The first gray of dawn cast a dim light on the camp. On the land side were groups of Cossacks and Tartars, some with their faces at the butt end of their muskets; the others bent backwards drawing their bows. On the water side were two caiques that were smoking and flaming from the constant salvos from the guns. And in the midst lay the bodies of those who had been killed, now lying peacefully in the sand.

In one of the canoes Skshetuski stood overtopping the rest, proud, calm, with his lieutenant's staff in his hand and his

head bare; for a Tartar arrow had taken his cap off. The sergeant approached him and whispered:

"Sir, we cannot hold out; the crowd is too great!"

But the ambassador was all the more determined to seal his embassy with blood; not to suffer his office to be insulted, and not to die ingloriously. Therefore he stood up while his men formed a sort of barricade with the sacks of provisions, from behind which they shot at the enemy, who were to be seen for quite a distance.

"Well," said he, "we will die to the last man."

"We will die, sir?" cried the Semenovs.

"Fire!"

The canoes were again enveloped in smoke; fresh crowds came from the island armed with spears and scythes. The assailants divided themselves into two parties; one division continued the fire; the other, consisting of more than two hundred Cossacks and Tartars waited for an opportune moment for a hand to hand encounter.

At the same time, four canoes came out of the reeds on the island, to attack the lieutenant from the rear and on both sides. It was already broad daylight. The smoke rose in columns in the motionless air and clouded the field of battle.

The lieutenant commanded the twenty Semenovs to go towards the approaching canoes which, propelled by oars, flew like birds on the quiet surface of the water. In this way, the firing, which had been directed towards the Tartars who came from the depths of the island became much weaker.

They appeared to be waiting for that.

The sergeant stepped up to the lieutenant again:

"Sir, the Tartars are placing their daggers between their teeth; they will soon make a rush."

Indeed more than three hundred of the horde, with swords in their hands and knives between their teeth, were preparing for an attack and with them a number of Zaporojians armed with scythes.

The attack was to be made from all sides, for the canoes had already got to within arrow-shot distance. They were enveloped in smoke; bullets fell like hail upon the lieutenant's men; groans were heard in both boats; in the course of a few minutes half the men had fallen; the rest defended themselves with the energy of despair. Their faces were black with smoke; their hands had become powerless, their glance unsteady; their eyes blood-shot; the barrels of the

muskets had begun to burn their hands, and the greater number of them were wounded.

At this moment a frightful noise and howling shook the air. The horde were rushing to the attack.

The smoke driven away by the movement of the crowd, disappeared and one could see the two canoes of the lieutenant overrun by a dark mass of Tartars, like the corpses of two horses torn by packs of wolves. The crowd pushed, surged and howled; they appeared to be fighting with one another and then seemed to disappear. A few Semenovs resisted still and at the mast stood Skshetuski, his face all bloody, an arrow sunk to the shaft in his left arm while he defended himself with the rage of despair. His form appeared gigantic among the surrounding crowd; his sword flashed like lightning. With every stroke were heard groans and howls. The sergeant and another soldier defended him on both sides, and the crowd drew back again and again with terror before these three. But, pushed forward from behind, they came within reach of the sword and fell to the ground.

"Let us take him alive to the ataman," screamed voices in the crowd. "Surrender!"

But Skshetuski only surrendered himself to God; for he suddenly grew pale, trembled, and fell to the bottom of the boat.

"Farewell, little father!" cried the sergeant in despair.

But he soon fell also; the surging crowd of the assailants completely filled the caiques.

CHAPTER XI.

In the cabin of the Kantarz[1] in the suburb of Hassan Pasha at Sich, two Zaporojians sat at table and refreshed themselves with millet brandy which they continuously dipped out of a wooden keg that stood in the middle of the table. One of them, an old man, nearly gray, was Philip Zakhar, the kantarz himself; the other was Anton Tatarchuk, the ataman of the camp at Chigrin, a man of about forty years, tall, powerful, with a savage expression of countenance, and the almond eyes of a Tartar. They were talking softly, as if they feared that someone might be listening.

"To-day, then?" asked the kantarz.

"If not sooner," answered Tatarchuk, "they are only waiting for the Koshov and for Tukhay Bey, who has ridden to Bazavluk with Khmyelnitski himself, because the Tartar horde is there. The peasantry have already collected in the square and the field commanders will assemble before evening to take counsel. Before night-fall all will be ready."

"H'm—it may be bad," grunted old Philip Zakhar.

"Listen, kantarz, you saw that I received a letter?"

"Certainly I saw it, for I myself caried the letter to the Koshov, and I am educated. They found three letters with the Poles, one to the Koshov himself, another for you, the third to the young Barabash. That is already known to everyone in Sich."

"And do you know who wrote them?"

"The prince wrote to the Koshov, for his seal was on the letter. Who your correspondent was, I do not know."

"God preserve us."

"If they do not point you out openly as a friend of the Poles, nothing will happen."

"God preserve us!' 'repeated Tatarchuk.

"You appear to have a guilty conscience."

"Pooh! I have no reason to have a guilty conscience."

"Perhaps the Koshov will destroy all the letters, for he

[1] Inspector of weights and measures at Sich.

himself is concerned. He received a letter as well as you."

"Perhaps."

"If you are guilty, then. . . . " Here the old kantarz lowered his voice.

"Fly!"

"But how, where, whither?" asked Tatarchuk uneasily. "The Koshov has placed guards on all the islands that no one may go over to the Poles and tell them what is going on." In Bazavluk the Tartars are keeping watch; no fish can swim past; no bird fly across."

"Well then, hide yourself in Sich as well as you can."

"They will find me. My only chance is for you to hide me under the barrels in the bazaar. You will pretend you are my relation."

"I would not hide my own mother's son. If you are afraid of death, get drunk; when you are drunk, you will not feel it."

"And perhaps there is actually nothing in the letters."

"Perhaps. . . . . "

"Alas! Alas!" said Tatarchuk. "I feel I am not guilty, I am a good Cossack and an enemy of the Poles but even if there wasn't anything in the letter, the devil knows what the Pole might say about it. He can destroy me."

"He is a shrewd Pole; he will say nothing."

"Did you go to see him to-day?"

"Yes, I smeared his wounds with tar; I poured gorzalka and ashes down his throat; he will get well; he is a shrewd Pole. They say that before he was taken prisoner he cut up the Tartars like swine at Khortyts. Have no uneasiness about the Pole."

A muffled sound of kettle-drums beating in the Koshov square interrupted the conversation. When Tatarchuk heard them, he sprang up startled. An unusual restlessness found expression in his face and movements.

"That is the call for the council to assemble," said he, trying painfully to catch his breath. "God help me, you, Philip, say nothing about what I told you; God be with me."

Then Tatarchuk seized the keg containing the gorzalka, carried it to his mouth with both hands, and drank and drank as if he would drink himself to death.

"Let us go," said the kantarz. The sound of the kettle-drums grew louder.

They went out: the quarter Hassan Pasha was separated

from the square only by a wall which surrounded the camp proper and by the gate with a high bastion from which the mouths of the cannon looked forth. In the middle of the quarter, stood the house of the kantarz and the cottages of the market atamans. Around the tolerably extensive square stood booths, in which were articles for sale. These were mostly miserable structures hammered together out of oak planks, such as abounded about Khortyts, and were covered with branches and rushes. The cottages themselves, not excepting that of the kantarz, looked more like arbors, for only their roofs rose above the ground. These roofs were black and smoky, for when they made a fire in the cottage, the smoke escaped not only by an opening in the roof but also through the whole thatch, and one might have imagined that it was not a cottage but a pile of branches and rushes in which tar was being burned. It was perfectly dark in these cabins and that was why a fire, made of oak shavings and pitch pine was kept continually burning. There were some dozens of these shop booths; they were divided into camp booths i. e., those that belonged to the camp, and booths for strangers in which, in times of peace, the Tartars and Wallachs sometimes carried on business, the first trading in furs, Oriental stuffs, weapons and every kind of booty; the others chiefly in wine. But the booths for strangers were seldom occupied, for business frequently changed into robbery in this wild nest; and neither the kantarz nor the market atamans could restrain the crowd. Between the booths, stood thirty-eight camp wine-shops, and, before them lay constantly in the midst of mud, shavings, litter, and horse-manure, Zaporojians, dead drunk, some in a deep sleep, others foaming at the mouth in convulsions or attacks of delirium. Others again half-drunk, howled Cossack songs, fought or kissed each other, cursing the fate of the Cossacks, or weeping about the Cossack misery and treading on the heads and bodies of those who were lying around them. It was only when an expedition against the Tartars or against Russia was determined upon that abstinence was enjoined, and then, drunkenness among the soldiers was punished with death; but in ordinary times almost everybody got drunk, the kantarz, the market ataman; the buyer and the seller. The sour smell of impure vodka in conjunction with the odors of pitch, fish, smoke, and horse-hides filled the air of the entire suburb, which by the varied colors of its little

shops reminded one of the wretched Turkish or Tartar villages. In these booths could be found all kinds of things that had been stolen in the Crimea, or Wallachia, or on the coast of Anatolia. Oriental stuffs of gay colors, trimmings, gold embroidered stuffs, gold lace, cloth, lace, ticking, and linen, guns, bits of iron, skins, furs, dried fish, cherries, and Turkish sweetmeats; church vessels, brass crescents, that had been stolen from the minarets, and gilt crosses snatched from church altars, powder, fire-arms, spears and saddles, and among this confusion of objects and colors men moved hither and thither clothed in the remains of the most varied of garments; in summer, perfectly naked, always half savage, blackened by smoke, covered with mud, full of dripping wounds from the bites of the huge mosquitoes which flew in myriads over the Chertomelik and, as already said, always drunk.

At this moment, the whole of Hassan Pasha was more crowded with people than usual, booths and wine-shops were closed, everyone hastened to the public square of Sich upon which the council was to be held. Philip Zakar and Anton Tatarchuk went with the rest, but the latter hesitated, walked slowly and let the crowd get ahead of him. An ever-increasing unrest showed itself upon his countenance. Meanwhile they crossed the bridge over the moat; then through the gate, they passed by thirty-eight large wooden buildings. These were storehouses, a sort of military barracks, in which the Cossacks lived. These barracks, all of the same size and width, differed in nothing but in names which they had borrowed from different towns of the Ukraine from which regiments also took their names. In one corner of the square, was the town hall where atamans held meetings under the direction of the Koshov; the crowd however or the so-called "Community" held council in the open air, sending deputations continually to the atamans, and even sometimes forcing their way into the town hall and terrorizing the assembled councillors.

A great crowd had already gathered on the square; for shortly before the Koshov Ataman had called together to Sich all the warriors that were dispersed over the islands, streams, and pastures. The community of members was therefore larger than usual. As the sun was declining several of the barrels were set on fire; here and there were kegs of vodka which each camp had caused to be distributed, and which

added no little energy to the councils. The Esauls watched over the discipline in the two camps; they were provided with stout iron sticks to keep the members of the councils within bounds, and carried pistols to defend their own lives which were often in danger.

Philip Zakhar and Tatarchuk went straight to the town-hall, for the one as kantarz and the other as camp ataman had the right to sit among the elders. In the council chamber was only a small table before which the military secretary sat. The atamans and the Koshovs took their seats on the skins by the walls. At that time the places were not all occupied. The Koshovs were striding up and down the room; the camp generals however stood in small groups and spoke in low tones, often interrupting their conversation by loud curses. Tatarchuk noticed that even his acquaintances and friends acted as if they did not see him and he stepped over to young Barabash who was in about the same position as he was. Others looked at them askew, which made no great difference to young Barabash as he did not rightly understand what the whole business meant. He was a man of remarkable beauty and extraordinary strength, to which attributes he owed his position as camp ataman, for otherwise he was noted in Sich for his stupidity. It had won him the name of the "silly Ataman," and the privilege of arousing the ridicule of the elders at every word that he spoke.

"Only a little while and then we shall perhaps be thrown into the water with a rope around our necks," whispered Tatarchuk.

"And why?" asked Barabash.

"Then you don't know anything about the letters?"

"What in thunder! What letters have I written?"

"See, how they are looking askew at us?"

"Oh! If I could only get at one of them by the throat then he would not be able to either see or hear."

Then cries were heard from the outside; something must have happened. The door of the council-room opened wide; Khmyelnitski and Tukhay Bey stepped in. They were both greeted heartily. Only a few months before, Tukhay Bey as the fiercest of the Murzas and the terror of the Nijovs, was the object of the most furious hatred in Sich—now the brotherhood threw their caps in the air at sight of him and looked upon him as a good friend of Khmyelnitski and of the Zaporojians.

Tukhay Bey stepped in first, Khmyelnitski following, with his baton in his hand as hetman of the Zaporojian forces. He had been clothed with all his dignity from the time when he went to the Crimea and demanded the assistance of troops from the Khan. The crowd upon his return had enthusiastically carried him on their shields, and breaking open the army treasury, had brought him the staff of Commander, also the colors and seal which were usually carried before the hetman. He had changed very much; one could see that he bore in himself the terrible power of the whole of Zaporoj. He was no longer the injured Khmyelnitski who fled to Sich across the Wild Lands; he was Khmyelnitski, the hetman, the sanguinary spirit, the giant who wished to revenge his own injuries on millions. And yet he had not broken his chains; he had only laden himself with new and heavier ones, as was evident by his relations with Tukhay Bey. This Zaporojian hetman occupied in the hearts of his soldiers a secondary position to the Tartar. He bore the latter's overbearing manner with humility and endured his unspeakably contemptuous treatment. It was the relation between a vassal and his lord. But it could not be otherwise. Khmyelnitski owed his whole importance among the Cossacks to the Tartars and to the favor of the Khan whose representative was wild, unbridled Tukhay Bey. But Khmyelnitski understood how to combine the pride which threatened to burst its bounds with humility, as he knew how to combine courage and cunning. He was both lion and fox; eagle and snake. For the first time since the Cossack kingdom had arisen, a Tartar played the part of master in Sich, evil times had come. The commune threw their caps in the air at the sight of a Pagan—such times had come!

The council began; Tukhay Bey took his seat in the midst of a high heap of furs. He crossed his legs, tailor fashion, and began to munch dried sunflower seeds and to spit the husks before him over the floor. At his right sat Khmyelnitski with his field-marshal's baton. At the left, the Koshovs and the atamans, and farther off, about the walls the deputation from the Commune. The conversation ceased; only from outside, like the noise of waves, sounded the dull murmur of the crowd which was conferring in the open air. Khymelnitski arose and said:

"Worthy sirs, with the permission, with the favor and aid of the illustrious Czar of the Crimea, of the Lord over many

peoples, of the relative of the heavenly bodies; with the permission of the gracious King of Poland, Vladislav, our Master, and with the trusty assistance of the valiant army of the Zaporojians; confiding in our innocence and the justice of God, we desire to avenge the frightful and cruel dishonor that we suffered like Christians and as long as we were able, from the dishonorable Poles, the commissioners, the starosts, and the landed proprietors, from the entire nobility and from the Jews. On account of this dishonor, you, worthy Sirs, and the whole of the army of the Zaporojians have already wept many tears, and for that reason you have placed the commander's-staff in my hand, that I may the more readily undertake to vindicate our innocence and to obtain privileges for the whole army. I consider it a great privilege, my worthy sirs, and on that account I went to the illustrious Czar to implore his assistance, which he has granted us. Joyful, and confident of better things, I was not a little saddened when I was told that there were traitors among us in communication with the dishonorable Poles, and giving them information about our preparations for war. If this is true, they shall be punished according to your good will and pleasure, worthy sirs; and we pray you to listen to these letters which a messenger from our enemy, Prince Vishnyovyetski has brought, not as an ambassador but as a spy, who seeks to spy upon our preparations for war and betray them to the Poles as well as the fact that we have Tukhay Bey's assistance: You must also be the judges whether he shall be punished in the same manner as those to whom he brought the letters, about whom our Koshov, as my faithful friend, and the friend of Tukhay Bey and of the whole army, gave us immediate information."

Khmyelnitski stopped speaking; the noise outside gradually increased; the military secretary began to read aloud the letter of the prince to the Koshov Ataman, which began with these words. "We, by God's grace, Prince and Lord in Lubni, Khorol, Pshyluts, Hadziats, etc., Russian Voyevoda, etc., Starosta, etc," The letter was purely official. The prince having heard that forces had been gathered together from the caves, etc., asked the ataman if it was true and demanded him at once, for the sake of the peace of Christendom, to put a stop to it; and should Khmyelnitski stir up Sich he wished him to be delivered up to the commissioners upon their demand. The second letter was from Pan Grod-

zitski, also to the chief ataman; the third and fourth from Zatsvilikhovski, the old Cherkass colonel, to Tatarchuk and Barabash. In all these letters, there was nothing which could lay the persons to whom they were written, open to suspicion. Zatsvilikhovski only requested Tatarchuk to receive the bearer of the letter, and to give him every assistance in fulfilling his mission.

Tatarchuk breathed freely.

"What say you, worthy sirs, about this letter?" asked Khmyelnitski.

The Cossacks were silent. All councils began this way, before the vodka had warmed their intellects, and not one of the atamans cared to speak; being uncultivated and crafty men they kept silent, chiefly for fear they might break out with some foolish speech which would render them ridiculous, or make them forever after the object of contemptuous nicknames. For so it was in Sich here, in the midst of the greatest boorishness, the fear of ridicule and dread of sarcasm strongly developed.

The Cossacks maintained silence. Khmyelnitski began to speak again.

"The Koshov Ataman is our brother and our true friend. I trust the atamans as I would my own soul, and whoever says otherwise is a traitor. The ataman is my old friend and soldier."

Then he rose and kissed the Koshov ataman.

"Worthy sirs," now said the Koshov, "I called the forces together, the hetman shall lead them; as regards the ambassador, he belongs to me as he was sent to me, and as he is mine I will give him to you."

"Worthy lord deputies, bow yourselves before the ataman," said Khmyelnitski, "for he is a just man; and go outside and say to the commune that, if there is a traitor, it is not he; he was the first one to station guards; he was the first to command that the traitors who wished to go over to the Poles should be arrested; go, my lord deputies, say that he is not a traitor, that the Koshov ataman is the best of all of us."

The deputies bowed low, first to Tukhay Bey, who during the whole meeting had chewed his sunflower seeds with the greatest indifference; then to Khmyelnitski, the commander-in-chief, and then to the Koshovs and left the room.

Immediately glad cries from the outside showed that the deputation had carried out the order.

"Long live our Koshov! Long live our Koshov!" cried the hoarse voices, with such power that the walls of the building seemed to tremble to their foundations.

At the same time, the sound of firing was heard from muskets and "mortars."

The deputation returned and took their place again in the corner of the room.

"Worthy sirs," said Khmyelnitski, as it grew a little quieter outside the windows, "you have decided wisely that the Koshov ataman is an upright man, but if the ataman is not the traitor, who is the traitor? Who has friends among the Poles? With whom are they in communication? To whom do they write letters? To whom do they recommend the person of the ambassador? Who is the traitor?"

Khmyelnitski's voice rose louder and his eyes glittered ominously in the direction of Tatarchuk and young Barabash, as if he would clearly point them out. A noise arose in the room. Several voices began to cry, "Barabash and Tatarchuk." Several colonels rose from their places, and from the deputies rose cries of "To the gallows!"

Tatarchuk turned pale and the young Barabash looked with astonished eyes at those around him. His slow intellect appeared to be studying for a time as to why he should be punished. At length he said:

"The dog won't eat meat!"

With these words, he broke into an idiotic laugh, in which others joined, and all at once, the greater number of the commanders began to laugh wildly without knowing wherefore. From outside, the noises grew louder, the vodka had evidently begun to heat their heads. The noise of the surging crowd increased more and more every moment.

But Anton Tatarchuk arose and, turning to Khmyelnitski, began to speak:

"What have I done to you, Hetman of the Zaporojians, that you should demand my death? What is my crime against you? The Commissioner Zatsvilikhovski has written me a letter—well? Has not the prince also written to the Koshov? And did I receive the letter? No! And if I had received it, what would I have done? I should have gone to the secretary and asked him to read it to me, for I can neither read nor write. Thus you would have known, in any case, what was in the letter. And I have never seen the Pole—how am I a traitor? Eh, brother Zaporojians? Tatarchuk went with

you to the Crimea, and when you went to Wallachia, he went with you there; when you went to Smolensk he went also to Smolensk; he fought with you good Cossacks, lived with you, good Cossacks, shed his blood for you, good Cossacks—he has suffered hunger in your company, good Cossacks, therefore he is no Pole, no traitor, but a Cossack, your brother, and if the hetman demands my death, let him say why he demands it, what I have done to him. Let him say in what way I have shown myself dishonorable? And you, brothers, think of heaven, and give a just judgment!"

"Tatarchuk is a good Cossack! Tatarchuk is an upright man!" was heard from several voices.

"Thou, Tatarchuk art a good Cossack," said Khmyelnitski, and I will not denounce thee, for thou art my friend, no Pole but a Cossack, our brother. For if a Pole were a traitor I would not be worried and would not weep; but when a brave Cossack proves a traitor, when my friend proves a traitor, I am heavy at heart, and I mourn for the good Cossack. And if you were in the Crimea, and in Wallachia, and at Smolensk, your sin is still greater, if you now dishonorably wish to betray our preparations for war, and the army of the Zaporojians, to the Poles! They have written to you; you were to assist their envoy to get what he should demand and tell me, worthy atamans, what can the Pole have demanded. Was it not my death and that of my dear friend Tukhay Bey? Was it not the ruin of the Zaporojian forces? You are guilty, Tatarchuk, and you cannot disprove it. And to Barabash, he received a letter from his uncle, the Cherkass colonel, a friend of Chaplinski, a friend of the Poles, who hid away the documents granting privileges, in order that the Zaporojians forces should not get them. If this be true and I swear to God that it is true, you are both guilty. Therefore pray for the atamans' mercy and I will implore it with you, although your crime is great and your treachery manifest."

The noise outside kept increasing; it sounded like the roar of a hurricane; the people wanted to know what was going on in the council chamber, and sent a fresh deputation.

Tatarchuk felt that he was lost. He now remembered that a week before, in a meeting of atamans he had counselled against giving Khmyelnitski the baton of commander, and against joining with the Tartars. A cold perspiration broke out on his forehead; he understood that there was no hope

for him. As for young Barabash it was clear that Khmyelnitski, in destroying him, wished to revenge himself on the old Cherkass colonel, who loved his nephew dearly; but Tatarchuk did not want to die; he would not have flinched before the sword, before a bullet, even before a stake—but a death like that which now awaited him struck terror to his marrow. Therefore he made use of the short interval of silence which followed Khmyelnitski's speech and cried in terror:

"In the name of Christ, brother atamans, my dear friends, do not destroy an innocent man; I have not even seen the Pole; not spoken to him. Have mercy brothers: I do not know what the Pole wanted from me; ask him yourselves! I swear by Christ the Redeemer, by the Holy Virgin, by St. Nicholas, the miracle worker, by the Holy Archangel Michael, that you seek to destroy an innocent man."

"Let the Pole be brought in!" cried the oldest Kantarz.

"The Pole! The Pole!" cried the atamans.

A great commotion arose. Some rushed into the adjoining room, in which the prisoner was shut up, in order to drag him before the council; the others approached Tatarchuk and Barabash in a threatening manner. Hladki, the ataman of the camp of Mirgorod cried first "To the gallows!" The deputies repeated the cry. Charnota, however, sprang towards the door, tore it open, and cried to the assembled crowd:

"Good sirs, good people, Tatarchuk is a traitor, and Barabash is a traitor! To the gallows with them!"

The crowd assembled with a frightful yell. In the room, confusion arose; all the atamans rose from their places; some cried "the Pole! the Pole!" Others tried to quiet the disturbance. Then the door opened under the crush and the crowd outside plunged into the middle of the room. Frightful forms, mad with rage, filled the room, screaming, waving their hands, grinding their teeth, and spreading abroad the odor of gorzalka.

"Death to Tatarchuk!" "To the gallows with Barabash!" "Give us the traitors!" "To the square with them!" cried the drunken voices. "Kill them, beat them to death!" and a hundred hands were stretched out for the unhappy victims.

Tatarchuk offered no resistance; he only groaned horribly. Young Barabash, however, began to defend himself with terrific strength. He finally understood that they wished to kill him; fear, despair, mad rage were expressed in his features.

He foamed at the mouth. The roar of a beast issued from his throat. Twice he tore himself from the hands of his executioners, and twice those hands seized his arms, and his beard. He threw himself this way, and that, bit, bellowed, fell upon the earth and rose again bleeding, dreadful to look at. His clothes were torn, his hair was pulled out by the roots, and an eye was gouged out. Finally, he was forced to the wall and his arms broken. Then he sank down. The murderers seized him by the feet and dragged him and Tatarchuk out on the square. Here, by the light of the tar barrels and bon-fires, the real execution began. Several thousand men threw themselves on the victims and literally tore them to pieces. Yelling, they fought to get near the objects of their fury. They were trampled on, pieces of flesh were torn from them, the crowd thronged around them with that frightful convulsive movement of maddened human masses. Soon two shapeless bits of human flesh that hardly reminded one of a human form, were raised in the air by bloody hands. Then they were thrown again to the ground. Those at a distance raised a frightful cry. Some demanded that they should throw the victims into the water; others, that they should put them into the burning tar barrels. The drunken men began to quarrel among themselves. In their madness they had set fire to two barrels of vodka which lighted up this hellish scene with a flickering blue flame; from heaven, the calm, clear, kind moon looked down on the scene.

This was the way the commune punished traitors.

Silence had fallen in the council-chamber, from the moment that the Cossacks had dragged Tatarchuk and the young Barabash out, the atamans had taken their old places along the walls; for a prisoner had been led out from the neighboring alcove.

A shadow fell on his face, for the fire in the chamber was smouldering, and in the half-light, one could see only a stately figure, proud and erect although the hands were bound with a cord. But Hladki threw a log of pitch-pine on the fire and before long a brilliant flame rose in the air and lighted up the face of the prisoner which turned towards Khmyelnitski with a calm glance.

Khmyelnitski started when he saw him.

The prisoner was Pan Skshetuski.

Tukhay Bey spat out the sunflower seeds, and growled in Russian:

"I know this Pole: he was in the Crimea."

"To the gallows with him!" cried Hladki.

"To the gallows!" repeated Charnota.

Khmyelnitski had recovered himself. He let his glance wander across to Hladki and Charnota, and they were mute under the influence of his eye. Then he turned to the Koshov and said:

"I know him, too."

"Whence came you?" asked the Koshov, of Skshetuski.

"I came as an ambassador to you, Ataman of the Koshovs, when robbers attacked me at Khortyts and in spite of custom, which even the most barbarous people respect, they killed my servants and, disregarding my dignity as ambassador, and my birth, they have ill-treated me and brought me here as a prisoner, on which account, my master, the illustrious Prince Yeremy Vishnyovyetski will demand an account from you, Ataman of the Koshovs."

"And why did you show yourself a traitor? Why did you strike down with your axe a good Cossack? Why did you kill four times as many men as you had yourself? And you came here with a letter to me to spy out our preparations for war and give information of them to the Poles. We know, also, that you had letters to traitors in the Zaporojian forces to form a conspiracy, to plan with them for the ruin of the whole army; consequently you are not an ambassador but a traitor, and will be punished as you deserve."

"You are mistaken, Koshov Ataman, and you too, Hetman who have plotted this whole thing," said the lieutenant, turning to Khmyelnitski, "if I had letters with me, so has every ambassador who travels in a strange country; he takes letters from friends to their friends, in order that they may thus have communication with them, and I came here with a letter from the prince, not in order to conspire against you, but in order to warn you against deeds which would bring frightful evil to the Commonwealth and to yourselves, and would completely annihilate the whole Zaporojian army. Against whom do you lift your Godless hand? Against whom are you entering into a compact with the Heathen, you, who call yourselves defenders of Christianity? Against the king, against all the nobility and against the entire Commonwealth! You, therefore, are the traitors, not I, and I tell you this, that if you do not by humility and obedience atone for your crimes, woe unto you! Are the times of the Pavluks and the Nalevaykas

remote? Have you already forgotten their punishment? Ponder well! the patience of the Commonwealth is exhausted and above your heads hangs a sword."

"You are barking, son of the enemy, in order to talk yourself out of punishment, and to escape death!" cried the Koshov ataman; "but neither your threats, nor your Polish Latin will help you."

The other atamans then began to grind their teeth and to clash their swords. Skshetuski, however, raised his head still more proudly and said:

"Think not, Koshov Ataman, that I fear death—or wish to protect my life or to prove my innocence. I am a nobleman and can only be judged by my equals, and I am not standing here before judges, but before murderers; nor before noblemen, but before peasants; not before knights, but before barbarians; I know well that I shall not escape the death with which you will complete the measure of your injustice. Before me are death and torture, but at my back is the might and the vengeance of the whole Commonwealth, before which you will all tremble."

His majestic figure, the distinction of his speech and bearing and the name of the Commonwealth made a powerful impression. The atamans looked at one another in silence. For a moment it seemed to them as if there stood before them, not a prisoner, but the threatening ambassador of a mighty people. Tukhay Bey, however, murmured:

"A daring Pole!"

"A daring Pole!" repeated Khmyelnitski.

A violent knocking at the door interrupted the conclave. The remains of Tatarchuk and Barabash had been disposed of. The people were sending a fresh deputation. A number of bloody, fierce-eyed, drunken Cossacks, dripping with perspiration, entered the room. They remained standing at the door, stretched out their hands, still reeking with blood and began to speak:

"The commune greets the elders"—here all bowed low, "and pray that you will deliver over to them this Pole in order that they may do to him as they have done to Barabash and Tatarchuk."

"Give them the Pole," cried Charnota.

"Do not give him up," cried another. "They must wait! He is an ambassador."

"To the gallows with him!" cried a number of voices.

Then they all became silent, waiting to hear what the commander and Khmyelnitski would say.

"The commune requests and, if that is not sufficient, will demand it," repeated the deputies.

Skshetuski appeared to be irretrievably lost. Khmyelnitski bent over to Tukhay Bey's ear.

"He is your prisoner," he said, in a low tone. "The Tartars brought him here, he is yours. Will you let him be taken from you? He is a rich nobleman, and in any case, Prince Yeremy will pay a sum in gold for his ransom."

"Give us the Pole," screamed more loudly the threatening voices of the Cossacks.

Tukhay Bey gathered himself together and stood up. His face changed in an instant; his eyes dilated like those of a wild cat; his teeth gleamed. Suddenly he sprang like a tiger toward the Cossacks who were demanding the prisoner.

"Begone, you oxen, you unbelieving dogs, slaves, eaters of swine," bellowed he, and seizing two Zaporojians by the beard he dragged them madly back and forth. "Begone, drunkards, unclean cattle, loathsome brood! You come to take away my booty, well I will treat you thus!"

He seized the beards of some other Cossacks and finally threw one to the ground and trampled on him. "Down on your knees, slaves, or I will drive you forth in chains. I will trample the whole of Sich as I trample you. I will let it consume in smoke! I will cover it with your carcasses."

The deputies retreated in terror—the terrible friend has shown what he could do.

And strange to say in Basavluk were only six thousand men of the horde! It is true that at their back was the Khan with his whole Crimean forces, but in Sich itself were about ten thousand Cossacks, besides those which Khmyelnitski had already sent to Tamokovka—and yet not a voice of opposition was raised against Tukhay Bey.

It appeared that the manner in which the threatening Murza had protected the prisoner was the only effectual way, for it at once had its effect upon the Zaporojians, to whom the help of the Tartars was at this moment indispensable. The deputies plunged out into the square and shouted to the crowd that they could not have the Pole to play with, for he was a prisoner of Tukhay Bey, and Tukhay Bey had given orders, and was in a rage. "He pulled our beards," they cried. Upon the square, the crowd began to repeat:

"Tukhay Bey is in a rage, he is in a rage. He is in a fury! He is in a fury! And a few moments later they began in plaintive voices to sing around the fires:

"Hey hey,
Tukhay Bey
Is in a rage,
Hey, hey;
Tukhay Bey
Don't be angry, dear."

Soon thousands of voices repeated, "Hey! hey! Tukhay!" And thus one of those songs took its origin which later echoed like a storm wind across the whole Ukraine, and resounded from the strings of every lyre and every lute theorbo.

Suddenly the song was interrupted for, through the gate leading into Hassan Pasha, plunged a swarm of people, who forced their way among the crowd and cried: "Woe unto us! Woe unto us!" and hastened at a quick pace in the direction of the court house. The atamans were already preparing to leave when these new arrivals broke into the room.

"A letter to the Hetman," cried an old Cossack.

"Whence come ye?"

"We come from Chigrin and have ridden day and night with the letter. Here it is!"

Khmyelnitski took the letter from the hand of the Cossack and began to read: his features suddenly changed their expression; he stopped reading and said, in a clear voice:

"Worthy sirs, and Atamans! The chief hetman is sending his son Stephen against us with an army. War!"

A strange murmur arose in the room; it was hard to say whether it was a murmur of joy or of horror. Khmyelnitski stepped into the middle of the room, placed his hands on his hips, his eyes flashing fire, his voice threatening and commanding:

"Let the field officers go to the camp! Get ready the cannons on the tower! Destroy the barrels of vodka! To-morrow at daybreak we will set out!"

From this moment the assembling together, the councils, the rule of the atamans, the diet, and the power of the commune came to an end. Khmyelnitski took possession of absolute authority. A moment before he was obliged, for fear his voice should not be heeded by the crowd, to defend the prisoner with cunning and by craft to suppress dissatisfaction; now he was lord of the life and death of all. It was al-

ways thus before and after warlike expeditions; even if the hetman had already been chosen the multitude would endeavor to force their will on the atamans and the Koshovs, and it was dangerous to oppose them. As soon, however, as war was declared, the commune became an army who submitted to military discipline; the Koshovs became officers, and the hetman became a general and a dictator.

For this reason, therefore, the atamans, as soon as they heard Khmyelnitski's command, started for their camps without delay. The council was at an end.

In a little while, the roar of cannon thundered down from the gate which led from Hassan Pasha to the public square of Sich; the walls of the council chamber trembled with the sound, and dismal echoes were spread over the whole Chertomelik, proclaiming war. A new epoch was begun in the history of the two peoples, but of that, neither the drunken men of Sich, nor the hetman of the Zaporojians was aware.

CHAPTER XII.

Khmyelnitski and Skshetuski went over to the Koshov ataman's camp for the night, and with them also Tukhay Bey; for whom it was too late to return to Basavluk. The wild Bey treated the lieutenant as a prisoner who was to be ransomed for a large sum, therefore not as a slave, but with more respect than he showed to the Cossacks, for he had seen Skshetuski at the time he was sent as the prince's ambassador to court of the Khan. When the Koshov saw this he invited him into his hut and altered his behavior towards him. The old ataman was devoted heart and soul to Khmyelnitski, who had made him completely his own and dominated him—and he had observed during the council that Khmyelnitski seemed quite anxious to rescue the prisoner; but he was still more astonished when Khmyelnitski who had hardly sat down in the tent thus addressed Tukhay Bey:

"Tukhay Bey, how much ransom do you think of demanding for this prisoner?"

Tukhay Bey looked at Skshetuski and said:

"You told me he was a distinguished man and I know that he is the ambassador of the terrible prince and the terrible prince loves his own, Bismillah![1] One pays, and the other pays—together . . . "

Here Tukhay Bey reflected: "Two thousand dollars."

Khmyelnitski answered, "I will give you two thousand dollars."

The Tartar was silent awhile; his almond eyes seemed to pierce Khmyelnitski through and through:

"You will give three," he said.

"Why should I give three, when you only asked two?"

"If you want him, there must be something behind it and, if it is important to you, you will give three."

"He saved my life."

"Allah, that is worth a thousand more!"

[1] In the name of God; the first word of the Koran.

Here Skshetuski interfered in the transaction:

"Tukhay," said he angrily, "from the prince's coffers I can promise you nothing, but if I have to draw upon my own fortune I would myself give you three. I have almost as much as that as commission from the prince and a nice property besides—that will be sufficient. But I do not wish to owe my life and my freedom to this hetman."

"And how do you know what I am going to do with you," said Khmyelnitski.

Then turning to Tukhay Bey, he said:

"The war has begun; you may send to the prince, but before the messenger returns, the waters of the Dnieper will be swollen; and I can bring you the money myself to-morrow to Bazavluk."

"Give me four, and I will not speak a word to the Pole," answered Tukhay Bey, impatiently.

"I will give four, on thy word!"

"Sir hetman," began the Koshov, "if you wish, I can count out the money here. I have it here behind the wall, perhaps even more."

"You will take it to-morrow to Bazavluk," said Khmyelnitski.

Tukhay Bey stretched himself, and yawned.

"I am sleepy," he said, "to-morrow before daybreak I must go to Bazavluk. Where shall I sleep?"

The Koshov pointed to a heap of sheepskins beside the wall.

The Tartar threw himself upon this couch; after a while he began to snort like a horse. Khmyelnitski walked up and down the small room several times, and said:

"Sleep has forsaken my eyelids, I can not sleep; give me something to drink, good Koshov."

"Gorzalka or wine?"

"Gorzalka; I cannot sleep."

"There are already streaks in the sky," said the Koshov.

"It is late; you go to sleep old friend; drink, and sleep!"

"Here's to success and happiness."

"Here's to success."

The Koshov wiped his mouth with his hand; then holding out his hand to Khmyelnitski, he went to the other end of the room and fairly buried himself in sheepskins, for his blood was getting thin from age. Before long his snoring made an accompaniment to that of Tukhay Bey.

Khmyelnitski sat at the table, buried in silence; suddenly he awoke, looked at Skshetuski and said:

"Lieutenant, you are free."

"I am grateful to you, Hetman of the Zaporojians, although I will not conceal from you that I would rather thank anyone rather than you for my liberty."

"You do not need to thank me, you saved my life, I have simply repaid you. So we are quits. But I must tell you this, that I cannot let you go until you have given me your knightly word of honor that, when you get home, you will not betray by a single word our preparations, our strength, and above all, anything that you have seen in Sich."

"I see only this, that you have bought my liberty in vain, for I will not give you such a promise; if I did so I should be acting like those who go over to the enemy."

"My neck, and the whole welfare of the Zaporojian army depend upon this that the chief hetman should not attack us with all his military forces, which he will infallibly do if you give him any knowledge of our strength. I know what I have dared to undertake; I know what a terrible power is opposed to me: the two hetmans, your terrible prince, who, alone, is worth a whole army, the Zaslavski, the Konyetspolski and all those petty kings who have their foot on the neck of the Cossacks. My God! I have not had an easy task; have written not a few letters before I was able to lull their watchfulness. How could I now permit you to arouse them? If the entire people, if the Cossacks, and all those whose faith and freedom is oppressed, place themselves under my lead, as the Zaporojian army and the good Khan of the Crimea have done, I hope to overpower the enemy, for I shall have immense strength; but before all I trust in God who has beheld the injustice, and who knows my innocence."

Here Khmyelnitski dashed down a glass of vodka and began restlessly to walk round the table. Skshetuski, however, took his measure with his eyes, and said:

"Hetman of the Zaporojians, do not blaspheme by calling upon God and His mighty protection, for truly you will only call down upon you God's anger and a speedy punishment. Does it become you to call upon the Highest for protection? You, who by reason of the injustice and intrigues that you have personally carried on, have aroused such a frightful storm; lighted the torches of a civil war and united with the Heathen against the Christians? For what will happen,

I WILL NOT GIVE YOU SUCH A PROMISE.

With Fire and Sword.

whether you conquer or are overcome. A sea of human blood and tears will be poured out. You will lay waste the land worse than a season of locusts. You will give your people in slavery to the Heathen; you will shatter the Commonwealth; you will raise your hand against the majesty of the throne; you will insult the altars of God, and all for what? Because Chaplinski robbed you of your country-seat, and, in his drunkenness, threatened you! What are you undertaking; what are you not sacrificing to your selfishness? You call on God! Truly I say to you, although I am in your power, although you can rob me of life and freedom—I say to you, call on the Devil for help, not on God; for Hell alone can second you!"

Khmyelnitski grew red as fire—he seized his sword and looked at the lieutenant like a lion who is just about to roar and pounce on his prey, but he soon calmed down; fortunately he was not yet drunk. Perhaps also, he was uneasy; perhaps a voice from his conscience called to him: "Turn back!" For suddenly, as if he wished to protect himself from his own thoughts, or to persuade himself, he said:

"From no one else would I have tolerated such words; but be careful that your boldness does not exhaust my patience! You seek to frighten me with Hell; you reproach me with selfishness and treachery; but how do you know that I am only seeking to avenge my own injuries? Where should I find assistance, but in those thousands who have already come over to my side, and who will yet take my part; who have promised if I only wish to avenge my own wrong? Look around you and see what is going on in the Ukraine, eh? This fruitful land; this land that is our mother; this land that has borne us: who is safe in it at any time? Who is happy here? Who is there whose faith is not oppressed, whose freedom is not taken from him, who does not mourn and sigh here? Only the Vishnyovyetskis, the Pototskis, the Zaslavskis, the Kalinovskis, the Konyetspolskis and a handful of the nobility! For them are the starostships, the dignities, the land and the people; for them happiness, and gold, and freedom; and the rest of the nation in tears lift their hands to heaven and wait patiently for the mercy of God; for that of the King is of no avail! How many of the nobility themselves were not able to endure this unbearable yoke, but fled to Sich, as I myself have done. I do not desire war with the king, nor with the Commonwealth! She is my

mother, the king my father; the king is a merciful lord but the petty kings under him we can not tolerate; to them belong corruption; the farms; the taxes on water and on land; to them the tolls on flour and cattle; their tyranny and their oppression, which they practice through the medium of the Jews, cry to Heaven for vengeance! What gratitude has the Zaporojian army experienced for the great services that it has rendered in numerous wars? Where are the rights of the Cossacks? The king granted them; but the petty kings have taken them away. Nalevayka was quartered; Pavluk was burned inside a brazen ox; the blood is not yet dry in the wounds made by the sword of the Zolkievski and Konyetspolski! The tears are not yet dry that we have wept for the slain, the decapitated, the impaled—and now—look here, what is shining yonder in the sky—" Here, Khmyelnitski pointed through the tiny window to the shining comet—"the wrath of God! the scourge of God! If I, then, am to be this scourage upon the earth—the will of God be done. I take this burden upon my shoulders."

Then he stretched out his hand towards heaven and appeared to glow like a huge torch of vengeance he began to tremble and then fell his full length upon a bench as though he were overcome with the weight of his resolution.

A silence followed that was broken only by the snoring of Tukhay Bey and of the Koshov, and in one corner chirped a cricket.

The lieutenant sat with bowed head as if he was seeking an answer to Khmyelnitski's words, that were as heavy as blocks of granite; finally he said in a gentle, calm voice:

"Ah! even if this were true, whom art thou, Hetman, that thou shouldst set up thyself as a judge and an executioner? What cruelty, what pride carries you away? Why dost thou not leave judgment and punishment to God? I would not defend the bad, I would not uphold oppression; I would not call wrong right; but turn your eyes into your own soul, Hetman! You complain of the oppression of the petty kings; you say that they obey neither the king nor laws; you scorn their pride, and are you free from pride yourself? Are you not raising your own hand against the Commonwealth; against law, against right, and against royal authority? You behold the tryanny of the petty kings and of the nobility, but one thing you do not see; that were it not for their breasts, for their coats of mail, for their strength, for their

castles, their cannon and their armies this country that flows with milk and honey would groan under the hundred times more heavy yoke of the Turks and the Tartar! For who would protect it? To whose protection, to whose strength do you owe it, that your children are not serving under the janissaries? That your women are not despoiled in disgraceful harems? Who peopled the wilderness, founded villages and towns, and erected temples to God?" . . .

Here Skshetuski's voice grew louder and Khmyelnitski fastening his eyes gloomily upon the bottle of vodka, brought his clenched fist down on the table, but remained silent as if he were carrying on an inward struggle.

"And who are they," added Skshetuski, "Are they from Germany or from Turkey? Are they not blood of your blood, bone of your bone? Is it not your nobility; are they not your princes? And, if this be so, then woe to you, Hetman, for you are arming the younger brother against the elder brother, and making parricides? Oh, God! Even if they were wicked, if they all, as they have not done, have trampled the law under foot; had taken away the rights; let God in heaven and the law on earth judge them, but not you, Hetman! Can you say that all among you are upright? Have you never committed crimes? Have you a right to throw stones? And as you have asked me, where are the rights of the Cossacks, I will answer you. It is not the petty kings that have betrayed you, but the Zaporojians; Loboda, Sasko, Nalevayka, and Pavluk, of whom you have falsely said that he was burned to death inside a brazen ox; for you know well that it is not true! They betrayed your insurrections, your restlessness, and your expeditions, which you have carried on after the manner of Tartars. Who let the Tartars into the boundaries of the Commonwealth, in order to attack and plunder them when they were returning home laden with spoils and booty—you, you! Who—by the living God—brought his own Christian brethren under the yoke of the Heathen? Who set on foot the greatest conspiracy—you! With whom is neither nobleman, nor merchant, nor peasant secure?—with you! Who set on foot the civil war? Who laid the villages and towns of the Ukraine in ashes? Who plundered the temples of God? Who violated women? You, and again, you! What do you want then? Shall the privilege of civil war, of plunder and robbery be given to you. Truly, you have been indulged rather than oppressed; we de-

sire to heal and not to amputate the putrid members; and I doubt, if, outside the Comonwealth, there is in the world a power that would suffer such an ulcer on its body politic and would exercise so much patience and gentleness! And as a reward for that long-suffering what is your gratitude? Look over there,—there is your sworn companion, the bloodiest enemy of the Commonwealth; your friend, but the enemy of the cross and of Christianity—no petty king of the Ukraine, but a Crimean mirza. With his assistance you wish to set fire to your own nest; with him, sit in judgment on your brethren! But from this out he will be your master; you will hold the stirrup and submit.

Khmyelnitski tossed down another glass of vodka.

"When I was with Barabash at the court of the great king," he answered gloomily, "and when we wept on account of the injustice and oppression that we suffered, the king said to us: 'Have you not guns and swords by your sides?' "

"If you were to stand before the King of Kings he would say: 'Hast thou forgiven thine enemies as I forgave mine?' "

"I am not seeking any war with the Commonwealth!"

"Yet you are putting your knife to her throat!"

"I wish to free the Cossacks from your fetters."

"And to fasten on them the fetters of the Tartars."

"I wish to defend the faith."

"With the assistance of the Heathen!"

"I tell you you are not the voice of my conscience, silence I say."

"The blood that is shed will weigh upon you; the tears of men will be your accusers; death awaits you; judgment stands ready for you!"

"Stop!" cried Khmyenitski in a towering rage, and flourished his knife before the breast of the lieutenant.

"Kill me!" cried Skshetuski.

And again silence ensued. Again one heard nothing but the snoring of the sleepers, and the plaintive chirping of the insects.

Khmyelnitski stood a moment, holding his knife at Skshetuski's breast; then he gathered himself together, threw himself back, let fall the knife, seized instead a huge bottle of vodka, and began to drink. He emptied it to the last dregs, and sank heavily down on the bench.

"I cannot run him through," he cried. "I cannot do it! It is already late—day is breaking, but it is too late to turn back—what can you judge about blood and justice?"

He had drunk enough before; now the vodka mounted to his head and little by little he was losing consciousness.

"What kind of justice? The Khan has promised me troops, Tukhay Bey is asleep here! to-morrow the Cossacks march and by the help of Saint Michael the Victor! . . . and if . . and if . . then . . I have bought your freedom from Tukhay Bey remember and say . . . Oh that pain . . . that pain! To turn back . . would be too late . . . justice . . Nalevayka . . . Pavluk . . ." He finally stretched himself out at full length, rolled his eyes horribly and screamed:

"Who is there?"

"Who is there?" repeated the Koshov, half-awakened.

But Khmyelnitski's head sank on his breast, he nodded once or twice and murmured: "What kind of tribunal?" and then fell asleep.

Skshetuski had grown so exhausted and weak from his late wounds and from the excitement of the conversation that he thought he was near death and began to pray aloud.

CHAPTER XIII.

Very early next morning, the Cossack forces, infantry and cavalry, marched out of Sich; although the steppes were not yet stained with blood the war had begun. Regiment followed regiment. They seemed like grasshoppers awakened by the spring sun as they crept out of the reeds of the Chertomelik and marched away over the meadows of the Ukraine. In the forest beyond Basavluk, six thousand picked Tartar warriors were already prepared to march, incomparably better armed than the usual robber mob of Stambul, these formed the allies which the Khan had sent to the Zaporojians and to Khmyelnitski. At sight of them, the Cossacks threw their caps in the air and saluted them with musket and gun. The shouts of the Cossacks mingled with the "Allah" of the Tartars and echoed in the air. Khymelnitski and Tukhay Bey both beneath their banners rode to meet each other and saluted each other formally.

The order of march was arranged with the quickness peculiar to Tartars and Cossacks, and then the forces began their manoeuvres. The mounted Tartars enclosed both wings of the Cossacks, the center was formed by Khymelnitski's cavalry, and behind them marched the dreaded Zaporojian infantry. Then came the gunners with the cannon; then the military wagons, the baggage masters, the commissariat; and finally the herders with the reserve stock and the cattle. After the regiments had crossed the forest of Basavluk they dispersed on the steppes. The weather was beautiful, not a cloud to be seen in the sky; a gentle wind blew from the north towards the sea, the sun played on the spears and on the flower of the wilderness. The Wild Lands stretched out like a limitless sea before the troops and joy filled the hearts of the Cossacks at this sight. The great red flag with the archangel displayed on it was repeatedly dipped to greet the native steppes, and following this example the bunchuks and the regimental standards were lowered. A shout of joy rose from each breast.

The regiments separated; the drummers and the buglers placed themselves at the head of the army; the kettledrums rattled; the bagpipes and the theorbos sounded and to this accompaniment arose a song which sung by thousands of voices echoed through the air and over the steppes.

Oh ye Steppes! Oh land of home!
In flowery garments robed,
And boundless as the ocean!

The pipers let go the reins, bent back on their saddle-cloths and struck the strings of their lutes, their eyes raised heavenward; the bell-players raised their hands above their head and struck the bells; the drummers tatooed on their kettle-drums and all these sounds blended with the monotonous words of the song and the shrill tone of the Tartar pipes in a strange wild music, sad as the wilderness itself. All the regiments became intoxicated with delight; their heads moved in time to the melody of the song, and finally it seemed as if the whole steppes were being stirred by the music, men, horses, and flags.

Flocks of frightened birds flew above and accompanied the army like a second army in the air.

At times the song and music were silent and then could be heard the fluttering of the flags, the trampling and snorting of horses, the creaking of the wagons, the screaming of swans or cranes.

At the head of the column, beneath the great red flag and the bunchuk, rode Khmyelnitski clothed from head to foot in red, seated upon a white horse, holding the glittering gold field-marshal's staff in his hand. The whole train moved slowly forwards in the direction of the north like a threatening ocean-wave covering untilled woods and hills, and filling the desert of the steppes with noise and bustle.

And from Chigrin, from the northern boundary of the wilderness, another great wave came from the opposite direction: The King's forces under the command of the young Pototski. Here the Zaporojians and Tartars marched as if they were going to a wedding with a song on their lips; yonder the earnest hussars proceeded in grim silence, as if they were marching reluctantly to an inglorious war. Here beneath the red flag, an old, experienced leader carried the Field Marshal's baton, as if he were confident of victory and vengeance; there, at the head of his forces sat a youth with

thoughtful countenance as though he realized his sad inglorious destiny.

The imemnse steppes lay between them as yet.

Khymelnitski did not hurry; he calculated thus: The farther the young Pototski penetrated into the desert, the farther he separated himself from the two hetmans, the easier it would be to conquer him. Meanwhile the forces of the Zaporojians were augmented from day to day by fresh fugitives from Chigrin, Porlots, and from all the border towns of the Ukraine, and these brought news from the enemy's camp. From them Khmyelnitski learned that the old hetman had sent his son with only two thousand horsemen by land, and six thousand men and a thousand soldiers of the German infantry in boats down the Dnieper. Both divisions had distinct orders to keep within touch of each other, but this command was disobeyed on the first day; for the boats were carried down by the strong current of the Dnieper and had got in advance of the division on the coast whose progress was still more delayed by having to ford the small rivers that flow into the Dnieper.

Khymelnitski hoped that this separation would become even greater and that was why he did not hurry. The third day after they set out he struck camp in the vicinity of Komysha Voda and rested. Meanwhile Tukhay Bey's spies brought informants; two dragoons who had escaped from Pototski's camp immediately beyond Chigrin; they had galloped day and night, and so were in advance of their division. They were at once brought before Khymelnitski. Their story confirmed what Khymelnitski already knew of the fighting strength of the young Stephen Pototski; they however brought the new information that the leaders of the Semenovs, who came with the German infantry on the boats, were no other than old Barabash and Kshechovski.

When Khymelnitski heard this last name, he sprang into the air as if he had been bitten by a tarantula.

"Kshechovski? The colonel of the Pereyaslav line regiment?"

"The very same illustrious Hetman!" answered the dragoon.

Khymelnitski turned to the officers who surounded him.

"March!' 'he commanded, in a voice of thunder.

Within an hour later the train moved forward although the sun was going down and the night was threatening.

Dreadful reddish clouds were grouped together in the west in the shape of dragons and leviathans, and approached each other as if they would enter into a combat.

The army moved to the left towards the bank of the Dnieper. Now it moved silently without song and without the sound of the kettle drums, or bells, and as quickly as the grass would allow; for it grew so tall that the regiments, as they walked through it, sometimes lost sight of each other and the bright flags appeared to be floating along the steppes. The cavalry and the wagons trod down a path for the infantry who moved forward with difficulty and finally were left a considerable way behind. Meanwhile, darkness fell over the steppes; the immense, red, gleaming moon broke slowly through the clouds, but was ever again hidden; it shone brightly for a few moments and went out again like a lamp which is blown by the wind.

It was already getting towards midnight when to the eyes of the Cossacks and Tartars there became apparent black gigantic masses which were distinctly seen against the dark background of the sky.

They were the walls of Kudak.

The advance guards, hidden by the darkness, crept carefully and gently forward like wolves or night birds. Perhaps it would be possible unexpectedly to attack the fortification which was buried in sleep. But, suddenly, a flash of light was seen on the ramparts; a terrific roar shook the rocks of the Dnieper; and a fiery ball described an arc in the sky and fell into the grass of the steppes.

"The gloomy cyclops, Grodzitski wishes to let us know that he is awake."

"The one-eyed dog!" Khymelnitski said to Tukhay Bey, "sees in the night."

The Cossacks avoided the fortress, they could not think of attacking it now that the king's forces were approaching, and so continued their march. But Colonel Grodzitski continued to fire after them so that the walls of the citadel trembled; not in order to kill anyone for they were too far off, but to warn the regiments on the Dnieper and those that might be in the neighborhood.

The sound of the cannon of Kudak however echoed in the heart and ears of Skshetuski. The young knight who, at Khmyelnitski's command, had been carried along in the army of the Cossacks had become very ill the following day.

In the fight at Khortyts he had indeed received no deadly wounds, but he had lost so much blood that his life was in danger. His wounds which the old kantarz had bound up, Cossack fashion, had reopened; a fever seized him, and the whole night long he lay half-unconscious upon a Cossack telega. The canons of Kudak awoke him. He opened his eyes, set up in the wagon, and let his glance wander around him. The Cossack train marched through the darkness like a ghostly procession, and the fortress roared and flashed in the red smoke; the fiery cannon-balls rolled through the steppes, crackling and snarling like maddened dogs. At this sight such an intense sadness took possession of Skshetuski, such a longing, that he was ready to die if only his soul could fly to those he loved. War! War! and here he was in the camp of the enemy, unarmed, sick, and chained to the wagon.

The Commonwealth in danger and he not able to fly to her assistance; and in Lubni, the forces were already under marching orders. The prince with his flashing eyes is moving from rank to rank and when he beckons with his princely staff three hundred spears clash like thunder. Here, several well-known faces appeared to the vision of the lieutenant. The little Volodiyovski is flying at the head of his dragoons with his small sword in his hand, but he is an incomparable fighter and whoever interferes with him is as good as dead. Over there, Pan Podbipyenta seems to raise his executioner's sword! Will he cut off the three heads, or not? The priest Yaskulski consecrates the colors and prays with uplifted hands, but he is an old soldier, and when he cannot stand it any longer, he calls out from time to time, "Kill! Kill!" Armed riders bend forward to their horses' ears; the regiments ride forward, separate, run hither and thither; there is a battle, war, tempest!

Suddenly the scene changes. Helena appears, pale, with dishevelled hair and cries "Help! Help! Bohun pursues me!" Skshetuski sprang up in the wagon, but a voice, this time a real voice, said to him:

"Lie still, child, or I will tie you down."

It was the Zakhar to whom Khymelnitski had given the commission to watch the lieutenant as the eye of his head. He laid him down again in the wagon, covered him with horses' hides and asked him:

"What is the matter?"

Skshetuski, at this question, came to himself; the visions vanished. The wagons were approaching the banks of the Dnieper; a cool gust came from the river, and the night grew clearer. Water-birds were beginning their morning chatter.

"Listen Zakhar, have we already passed Kudak?" asked Skshetuski.

"Yes," answered the Zaporojian.

'Where are we going?"

"I do not know. There will surely be a fight, but I do not know."

At these words, Skshetuski's heart beat joyfully. He had thought that Khmyelnitski would besiege Kudak and thus begin the war; but the haste with which the Cossacks moved forward made him surmise that the royal forces were already near and that Khymelnitski had intentionally passed by the fortress, in order not to be obliged to fight beneath its cannon. "To-day I may be free," thought the lieutenant, and raised his eyes gratefully to heaven.

CHAPTER XIV.

The thunder of the Kudak cannon was heard also by the forces which under the command of old Barabash and Kshechovski were sailing down the Dnieper. They consisted of six thousand Cossacks of the Line and a regiment of picked German infantry, comanded by Hans Flick.

Pan Nicholas Pototski had long hesitated whether he should send the Cossacks against Khymelnitski. As Kshechovski however had a great influence over them and the hetman had absolute confidence in him, he merely made the men take the oath of fealty and sent them against the enemy in God's name.

Kshechovski—a soldier of full experience and rich in military laurels, was a client of the house of Pototski to whom he owed everything; his position as commander, his nobility, which they had obtained for him in the Diet; and last of all, the enormous possessions which lay at the junction of the Dniester and the Ladava, which he had received for his use as long as he lived.

So strong were the ties which bound him to the Commonwealth and to Pototski that not a shadow of doubt could arise in the soul of the hetman. He was, besides, a man in the prime of life, for he was hardly fifty and in the service of this country, a great future lay before him. Many thought they saw in him the successor of Stephen Khymelnitski who had begun as a simple knight of the steppes, and had risen to be Voyevoda of Kiev, and senator of the Commonwealth. It depended on Kshechovski himself, whether he would follow the same road, upon which courage, a wild energy, and a boundless ambition impelled him, equally hungry for wealth as for honors. This ambition it was that had induced him a short time before to seek to attain the dignity of starosta of Lityn, and, when finally, Korbut had received this post Kshechovski buried his disappointment in his own bosom, although he was almost ill from envy and anger. Now, fate appeared once more to smile on him for, as the

chief Hetman had given him such an important military position he was able to reckon with some certainty that his name would come to the ears of the king, and that was very important, for then it would only be necessary to put forward a request in order to obtain the privilege, with these words so dear to a nobleman's heart, "He has made obeisance to us and prayed us to reward him, and we, in memory of his faithful service, grant him, etc." By this means one obtained wealth and honors in Russia; by this means the immense surface of desert steppes, which had formerly belonged to God and to the Commonwealth, went into private hands; in this manner a pauper became a lord and could comfort himself with the hope that his heirs might one day take their place among the Senators.

One thing only grieved Kshechovski, that he must share his important office with Barabash, but this division was only nominal. In truth the venerable Cherkass colonel had become so old and weak, especially in later years, that he belonged only with his body to this earth; his soul, his mind were constantly in a state of semi-unconsciousness as is usually the case before the death of the body. At the beginning of the expedition, he had gathered himself together and began to work actively; one might have believed that the old soldier's blood flowed more quickly at the sound of the trumpets—in his time he had been a famous knight and leader of the steppes—but soon after setting out, the plashing of the oars had soothed him; the songs of the soldiers and the movement of the boats had sent him to sleep; so that he forgot the God's world.

Kshechovski ordered and managed everything; Barabash awoke only to eat, and, when he had finished, he asked from habit about one thing and another—they gave him any suitable answer, and then he would sigh and say:

"Ah! I would willingly march to the grave in another war but God's will be done!"

Meanwhile the conjunction with the crown forces, which marched under the command of Stephen Pototski, was broken at once. Kshechovski complained that the hussars and the dragoons marched too slowly; that they also, when crossing the river, took matters too leisurely; that the young son of the hetman did not possess sufficient military experience; but in spite of all this he continued his journey.

The boats floated down the Dnieper towards Kudak and distanced the royal forces more and more.

At length, one night, was heard the thunder of cannon.

Barabash slept and did not awake; Flick, however, who had sailed ahead, got into a small boat and went to Kshechovski.

"Colonel," he said, "those are the cannons of Kudak. What shall we do?"

"Anchor the boats; we will remain all night in the rushes."

"Khmyelnitski is doubtless besieging the fortress; according to my opinion we ought to hasten to its relief."

"I do not ask you for your opinion, I only give my orders. The command belongs to me."

"Colonel! . . . "

"Anchor and wait," said Kshechovski.

As he saw, however, that the energetic German was tugging at his yellow beard and had no idea of giving in without very good reasons, he added somewhat less sternly, "The Castellan may arrive to-morrow with the cavalry, and the fortifications cannot be taken in one night."

"But if he should not arrive?"

"Well then we will wait even two days. You do not know Kudak; you would break your teeth against its walls, and I will not move to the relief without the Castellan for I have no right to do so. That is his affair!"

Kshechovski appeared to be absolutely in the right, therefore Flick did not insist any longer, and went back to his Germans. After a while, the boats began to approach the right bank of the river and to make their way into the reeds that covered the edges of the river for over a hundred feet on either side. The plashing of the oars ceased; the boats were completely hidden in the reeds, and the river appeared to be perfectly still. Kshechovski forbade the men to sing, to light a fire, or to carry on any conversation, so that deep silence prevailed, which was only interrupted by the echo of the canon from Kudak.

But no one on the boats, except old Barabash, closed their eyes. Flick, a knightly and warlike man, would have preferred to fly, like a bird, to Kudak; the soldiers asked each other in whispers. What would happen to the fortress, could it hold out? Would it hold out? And the thunder of the cannon grew more frequent. All were convinced that the fortress was repelling a determined assault. "Khmyelnitski is not joking, but Grodzitski also is not joking," whispered the Cossacks. "And what will to-morrow bring?"

The same question presented itself also to Kshechovski who sat in the prow of his boat, buried in deep thought. He had known Khmyelnitski well, and for a long time; hitherto he had always considered him a man of remarkable ability, who only needed a field for his energy to soar upwards like an eagle. Now, however, Kshechovski doubted his ability. The cannon thundered uninterruptedly. Khymelnitski must be besieging Kudak!

"If it is true," thought Kshechovski, "he is a lost man."

How was it, that after he had incited the Zaporojians to rebel; after he had assured himself of the Khan's assistance; after he had gathered forces such as no Cossack leader ever commanded; how was it that Khymelnitski, instead of marching to the Ukraine with all speed, instead of arousing the people and gaining the towns over to him, in order to destroy the hetmans as speedily as possible, and to bring the whole country into his power before fresh defenders and fresh forces arrived; how was it that Khmyelnitski, the old soldier should be so mad, as to storm an impregnable fortress that could hold out for a year? Was he going to allow his best fighting men to be dashed to pieces against the walls of Kudak like the waves of the Dnieper that dashed themselves upon the rocks of the rapids? Would he wait near Kudak till the hetmans gathered their forces and surrounded him, as they did Nalevayka at Solonits? . . .

"He is a lost man," repeated Kshechovski. "His own Cossacks will deliver him up. An unsuccessful attack will only breed discontent and insubordination; the spark of the rebellion will be extinguished—Khmyelnitski will not inspire any more terror than a sword with a broken hilt."

"He is a fool."

"Consequently," thought Kshechovski, "to-morrow I will take my soldiers and Germans on shore, and the following night I will unexpectedly attack his forces, weakened as they are by the assault. I will hew down the Zaporojians to the last man, and cast Khmyelnitski, bound, at the feet of the hetman. It is his own fault. He might have prevented it!" Here Kshechovski's ambition took a higher flight. He knew right well that the young Pototski could not in any case arrive until the following night; who then would cut off the head of the hydra? Who would crush the rebellion, which, with its frighful torch, might consume the whole Ukraine? The old hetman will perhaps look a little blank to think

that this should have all happened without his son's assistance, but he will soon recover himself and, meanwhile, all the rays of glory and of the royal grace will fall upon Kshechoski's victorous brow."

And yet I shall have to divide the glory with old Barabash and with Grodzitski! Kshechovski looked very gloomily before him but he soon became cheerful again. That old fossil, Barabash, may be laid in the earth any day, and Grodzitski asks nothing better than to remain at Kudak, and from time to time frighten the Tartars with his guns.

So Kshechovski would remain alone.

If he could only become hetman of the Ukraine! The stars twinkled in the sky, and to the colonel they appeared like the gems in his field marshal's baton; the wind stirred the reeds, and to him it seemed as if it were the rustle of the hetman's bunchuk.

The cannons at Kudak contiued to thunder.

"Khmyelnitski is offering his throat to the sword," thought the colonel, "but that is his own fault. It might have been different. If he had only pushed forward to the Ukraine! . . . It might all have been different."

There, everything is bubbling and raging, there is powder only waiting for the spark; the Commonwealth is mighty, but in the Ukraine she has no power, and the king is old and sick.

A victory by the Zaporojians might have incalculable results.

Kshechovski buried his face in his hands and sat immovable; the stars continued their course towards their setting, and gradually settled over the whole steppes. The blackbirds hidden in the grass began to call to one another; it would soon be day.

At length the thoughts of the colonel resolved themselves into a firm determination. To-morrow he would attack Khmyelnitski and grind him to dust. Across his corpse he would attain wealth and dignity; he would be the instrument of punishment in the hands of the Commonwealth; he would be her defender, and in the future her honored citizen and senator. After the victory over the Zaporojians and Tartars they could deny him nothing.

And yet they had not given him this starostaship of Lityn.

At this recollection, Kshechovski clenched his fist. He had not received the starostaship, in spite of his military ser-

vices; only because he was an upstart, because his rival derived his descent from princes. In this Commonwealth it was not enough to be a noble; one must wait until one's crest was covered with mildew, like wine, until it was as rusty as iron.

Khmyelnitski, alone was able to introduce a new order of things which the king himself would gladly favor—but the unlucky fellow would rather smash his head on the stones of Kudak!

By degrees, the colonel became calmer. They had denied him the starostaship—what was the consequence? They would be all the more anxious to reward him, especially after the overthrow of the rebellion, especially after he had delivered the Ukraine,—yes, the entire Commonwealth, from the civil war. Then they would not refuse him anything; then he would no longer need Pototski. . . .

His drowsy head sank on his breast—and he fell asleep and dreamed of starostships, of Castellans, of grants from the king and from the Diet. . . When he awoke, day was breaking. In the boats all were asleep. In the distance the waves of the Dnieper gleamed in the pale uncertain light. All about reigned absolute silence; this silence had awakened him.

The cannons of Kudak had ceased to thunder .

"How is that?" thought Kshechovski. "Is the first attack repulsed, or Kudak taken?"

But that could not be, no!

The defeated Cossacks were probably halting somewhere far from the fortress and dressing their wounds, and the one-eyed Grodzitski was looking after them through the loop-holes, and was loading his guns again.

To-morow they will return to the attack, and again run their heads against the walls."

Meanwhile the day had come; Kshechovski wakened the people in his boat, and sent a boat to Flick.

Flick came without delay.

"Colonel," said Kshechovski to him, "if the Castellan does not come this evening, and if the storming is continued during the night, we will go to the relief of the fortress."

"My men are ready," said Flick.

"Then give them powder and bullets."

"That has been done."

"We will land at night and advance as quietly as possible through the steppes. We will attack them unexpectedly."

"Gut, sehr gut!" said Flick, "but should we not rather get a litle nearer, in the boats? It is about four miles to the fortress, somewhat far for the infantry."

"The infantry can take the horses of the Semenovs."

"Sehr gut!"

"The men must lie still in the reeds, not go ashore; and make no noise, light no fires, for the smoke might betray us. We must not be discovered."

"The fog is so thick that they would not see the smoke."

In fact, the river, and the little bay overgrown with rushes, in which stood the boats; and the steppes, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with a white, impenetrable mantle of fog. As it was, however, still early in the morning, the mist might rise and reveal the expanse of the steppes.

Flick paddled away. The people on the boats moved slowly. Kshechovski's commands were announced that they should keep quiet; therefore, the men went to their morning meal without the usual noise made by soldiers. No one passing by the shore or sailing down the middle of the stream would have believed that, in the reeds near by, some thousands of men lay hidden. The horses were fed by hand that they might not neigh. The boats lay hidden by the mist in the thicket of reeds; here and there a small two-oared boat went back and forth bringing biscuits and orders from the commander; otherwise all was as still as the grave.

Suddenly, there were heard in the grass, in the rushes, in the reeds, and in the river marshes around the whole inlet, various strange sounds.

Pugu! Pugu!

Then silence. . . .

Pugu! Pugu!

And again all was still, as if those voices that called from the shore were awaiting an answer.

But no answer came; for the third time cries were heard but quicker, and more impatiently.

Pugu! Pugu!

Then sounded from the boats Kshechovski's voice, through the mist:

"Who goes there?"

"A Cossack from Lug!"

The hearts of the Semenovs who were in the boats beat restlessly. That mysterious call was familiar to them. In this way the Zaporojians signalled to each other in winter

quarters. In this way also, in times of war, they invited their brothers of the regular regiments and the Cossacks of the towns to a conference. Many of these Cossacks belonged secretly to the Brotherhood.

Again sounded Kshechovski's voice:

"What do you want?"

"Bogdan Khmyelnitski, the Hetman of the Zaporojians, announces that the cannon are trained on the Poles."

"Tell the hetman of the Zaporojians that ours are directed towards the shore."

Pugu! Pugu!

"What more do you want?"

"Bogdan Khmyelnitski, the hetman of the Zaporojians, writes his friend, Colonel Kshechovski, to a conference."

"He must give hostages."

"Ten kurzens."

"Agreed."

At this moment, along side the Poles, the Zaporojians sprang up like flowers; they rose up out of the grass in which they had lain hidden. Far away across the steppes, their cavalry and cannon came marching on, and hundreds of flags and banners and bunchuks appeared. They marched with songs and the beating of kettle-drums. All this seemed more like a greeting than a meeting of hostile forces. The Semenovs on the boats answered with loud shouts. Meanwhile the boats came along commanded by the Kurzen atamans. Kshechovski boarded one of them and went ashore. There, they brought him a horse and immediately led him to Khmyelnitski.

When Khmyelnitski saw him, he took off his cap and greeted him cordially.

"Worthy Colonel," said he, "my old friend and comrade, when the Chief Hetman of the Crown commanded you to seize me and bring me into camp, you were not willing to do it, but warned me so that I might save myself by flight, and for this act I owe you gratitude and brotherly affection."

Then he stretched forth his hand courteously, but the dark face of Kshechovski remained cold as ice.

"Now, however, after being saved, Sir Hetman, you have become the leader of the rebellion."

"Our wrongs, yours and mine, and those of the whole Ukraine would I redress, with the king's charter of rights in my hands, and in the hope that our gracious Lord will not count it against me."

Kshechovski looked sternly into Khmyelnitski's eyes, and said emphatically:

"Have you besieged Kudak?"

"I? I would have been mad to do so. I went past it and did not even fire one shot, although the old Cyclops received me with his cannon. I have urgent business in the Ukraine, not in Kudak; and I was especially anxious to see you, my old friend."

"What do you want with me?"

"Ride a little way with me across the steppes and we will come to an understanding."

They mounted their horses and rode away. They were gone one hour. On their return, Kshechovski's face was pale and agitated. He took leave of Khmyelnitski, who said to him on the road,

"We two will be the only ones in the Ukraine and over us the king alone, and no one else."

Kshechovski returned to the boats. Old Barabash, Flick, and the others awaited him impatiently.

"What's going on there?" they asked him on all sides.

"Pull up close to the shore," answered Kshechovski, in a commanding voice.

Barabash opened his sleepy eyes. A strange fire was in his glance.

"What?" he said.

"Go ashore. We must give ourselves up."

The pale, yellowish face of Barabash suddenly became crimson. He sprang from the kettle drum on which he was sitting, rose to his full height and, suddenly, this old man, bowed with age, was transformed into a giant full of strength and life.

"Treason!" he roared.

"Treason!" repeated Flick, and seized his rapier.

But, before he could draw it, Kshechovski flashed his sword through the air and with a blow cut him to the ground. Then he sprang from the boat into a small boat that was lying near, in which were sitting four Zaporojians with oars in their hands, and cried:

"To the boats!"

The boat darted away like an arrow. Kshechovski, with cap on the tip of his bloody sword, stood in the middle of the boat, his eyes flashing fire, and cried with a powerful voice:

"Children, we will not kill our own people; long live Bogdan Khmyelnitski, the Hetman of the Zaporojians!"

"Long live Khmyelnitski!" repeated hundreds and thousands of voices.

"Death to the Poles!"

"Death!"

The roar from the boats answered the Zaporojians on the shore, but many in the boats that were lying at a distance did not know what all the commotion was about; but as the news spread that Pan Kshechovski had gone over to the Zaporojians, a regular furor of joy took possession of the Semenovs. Six thousand caps were thrown into the air, six thousand muskets roared, the boats trembled beneath the tread of the Cossacks. Tumult and confusion arose. But the joy was to be paid for in blood. Old Barabash preferred to die rather than betray the flag under which he had served his whole life long. A few dozen Cherkass soldiers took his side and a short, dreadful fight took place—like all those fights in which a handful of men, who do not desire mercy but death, defend themselves against a multitude. Neither Kshechovski nor any of the Cossacks had expected any such opposition. The old lion was awakened. To a demand to lay down his arms, he replied with shots, and one could see him with the field marshal's staff in his hand, his white hair floating in the wind, giving his commands in a voice of thunder, and with the energy of youth. His boat was surrounded on all sides. The men on the boats who could not get near sprang into the water, waded through the reeds, and, seizing the edge of the boat, climbed furiously into it. The resistance was short. Barabash's Semenovs lay pierced, battered, or with mangled hands, on the bottom of the boat—only the old man still defended himself with his sword in his hand.

Kshechovski made his way to him.

"Surrender!" he cried.

"Die, traitor!" answered Barabash and raised his sword to strike. Kshechovski withdrew rapidly into the crowd.

"Kill!" he said to the Cossacks.

But it seemed as if no one wished to be the first to raise his hand against the old man. Unfortunately however, the old colonel slipped on the bloody bottom and fell down. As he lay on the deck, he no longer inspired fear or respect, and soon a number of swords had pierced his body. The old man was able only to cry out:

"Jesus Maria!"

They began to hack at the prostrate form and to cut it to pieces. They threw the head from one boat to another and played ball with it until through a clumsy catch it fell into the water.

There still remained the Germans who were not so easily dealt with, for the regiment consisted of a thousand veterans who had been trained in many wars.

The valiant Flick had fallen under Kshechovski's hand, but at the head of the regiment there still remained Johann Werner, the lieutenant-colonel, a veteran of the Thirty Years War.

Kshekovski was certain of victory, for the German boats were surrounded on all sides by Cossacks. He wished, however, to retain such a large number of incomparable and well armed infantry for Khmyelnitski, therefore he preferred to treat with them.

For a time it seemed as if Werner would agree to what he wanted, for he conversed quietly with Kshechovski and listened attentively to all the promises with which the latter and his friends overwhelmed him. The pay in which the Commonwealth was in arrears would be paid up immediately, and also for a year ahead, and after that time the soldiers might go whither they would, even into the king's camp.

Werner acted as if he were considering, but, meantime, he gave quiet instructions for the boats to pull up close to one another so that they formed a compact circle. At the edge of this circle stood a wall of foot soldiers, stout, powerful men, in yellow jerkins and yellow caps, in perfect order of battle, the left foot advanced ready to fire, the muskets at their right side.

Werner, his sword drawn, stood in the front row and considered for some time; finally, he raised his head.

"Herr Hauptman!" he said, "we understand one another!"

"You will lose nothing in the new service," cried Kshechovski joyfully.

"But on condition. . . . . "

"Well, I agree to it."

"Well, that's all right. Our service to the Commonwealth ends in June; from June out we belong to you."

An oath rose to Kshechovski's lips, but he held it back.

"Are you mocking me, Lieutenant?" he asked.

"No," answered Werner quietly. "Our military honor behooves us to keep our word. Our service it at an end in June. We serve for money; but we are no traitors. Otherwise no

one would employ us, and you yourself would not trust us; for who would be surety that we would not go over to the Hetman in the very first battle."

"What do you want then?"

"That you let us leave you."

"That is impossible, you madman! I will have you all cut down."

"And how many of your own men do you expect to lose?"

"Not one of you shall escape."

"You will leave half your men on the field."

Both spoke the truth, therefore Kshechovski, although the coolness of the German aroused his blood, and fury began to take possession of him, did not wish to begin the combat.

"Before the sun sets," he cried, "reflect, or the firing will begin!"

And he moved off quickly in his small boat in order to confer with Khmyelnitski.

A period of suspense followed; the Cossack boats closed in a circle round the Germans, who maintained a calm bearing as only old, practiced soldiers can maintain in the face of danger. To the threatenings and insults which poured unceasingly from the Cossack boats, they answered with a disdainful silence. It was a truly imposing sight, this calmness in the midst of the increasing ebullitions of rage on the part of the Cossacks, who with threats, shook their lances and muskets, ground their teeth and cursed and impatiently awaited the signal for combat.

Meanwhile the sun, which had moved from the south to the west, withdrew by degrees its golden beams from the inlet.

Finally it became perfectly dark.

The bugles sounded and thereupon was heard Kshechovski's voice in the distance:

"The sun is down! Have you decided?"

"Yes," answered Werner—he turned to his soldiers and waved his drawn sword.

"Feuer!" he commanded, in a quiet, phlegmatic voice.

A report! The splash as men fell into the water, cries of rage and rapid firing answered the voices of German muskets. The cannon on the shore began to roar and hurl their balls at the German boats. The whole place was full of smoke—and amid the thunder, the cries, the whirr of the Tartar arrows, the rattle of muskets and guns, the regular salvos of their muskets alone announced that the Germans were still defending themselves.

At sundown the fight still raged, but it appeared to be slackening in intensity.

Khmyelnitski, accompanied by Kshechovski, Tukhay Bey, and several atamans, had come to the shore to observe the fight. His distended nostrils inhaled the smoke of the powder, his ears heard with delight the noise of the drowning and slaughtered Germans. The three commanders looked at this carnage as if it were a play, which at the same time was a favorable omen for them.

The battle ceased. As the firing slackened, louder and louder rose the cries of triumph from the Cossacks to the clear sky.

"Tukhay Bey!" cried Khmyelnitski, "this is our first victory."

"There are no prisoners," growled the Murza. "I do not care for such a war."

"You will find plenty in the Ukraine; you will be able to fill the whole of Stambul and Galatz with your captives."

"If I find no other, I will take you!"

With these words, the wild Tukhay laughed ominously, but presently added:

"I should have liked to have those 'Franks.' "

The fight was over. Tukhay Bey turned his horse's head towards the camp, the others followed him. "Now, for the Zolta Wody," cried Khmyelnitski.

CHAPTER XV.

The lieutenant had heard the noise of combat and tremblingly awaited the result, for he thought at first that Khmyelnitski had begun an engagement with all the forces of the hetman.

But, towards evening, old Zakhar enlightened him. The news of the treachery of the soldiers under Kshechovski and the destruction of the Germans disturbed the inmost soul of the young knight, for this was but the preliminary to other treachery, and Skshetuski knew well that a greater part of the hetmans' forces consisted chiefly of Cossacks.

The anxiety of the lieutenant increased and the triumph of the Zaporojians heightened his misery. Everything foretold the worst that could happen. There were no tidings from the Prince—and the hetmans had evidently committed a grave error when, instead of marching upon Kudak with all their forces, or awaiting the enemy in a fortified camp in the Ukraine, they had divided their forces, voluntarily weakened themselves and laid the way open to defection and treachery. They spoke in the Zaporojian camp of a considerable army under Kshechovski and Stephen Pototski, but the lieutenant had given no credit to this news.

He believed that these were only the strong vanguards which at the right time would be withdrawn. Other things had happened meanwhile. Khmyelnitski had, through Kshechovski's treachery strengthened themselves with several thousand men, and a frightful danger threatened young Pototski. Deprived of assistance and having lost his way in the wilderness how easily could Khmyelnitski surround him and exterminate his forces.

Amid the pain caused by his wounds, amid his unrest, in his sleepless nights all that comforted Skshetuski was the remembrance of the prince. Khmyelnitski's star would pale when that of the prince rose in Lubni. And who could say that he had not already united with the hetmans? Although Khmyelnitski's forces were strong; although his expedition

had begun successfully; although Tukhay Bey accompanied him and, in the event of mishap, the "Czar" of the Crimea himself had promised assistance, Skshetuski had not the least idea that this storm would be of long duration, that a Cossack could shake the whole Commonwealth to its foundations and cripple its power. The storm will be broken on the threshold of the Ukraine—thought the lieutenant, for we have quelled all the Cossack insurrections. They sprang up like flames and sibsided at the first encounter with the hetmans. It has always been thus. When, on the one hand, a swarm of Nij bandits marched forward to battle, on the other hand, a power that was bounded by two seas, the result was easily foretold. The storm could not last long, therefore it would pass—and good weather come again. This thought encouraged Skshetuski, kept him, so to speak, on his feet; for otherwise he would have been crushed by such a heavy burden as he had never yet borne in his life. Though the storm should pass, it would devastate fields, overthrow houses and cause irretrievable damage. If through this storm he had come within an ace of losing his life, had lost his strength, and had come into bitter slavery, just at the time when freedom meant so much to him, as much as life itself; how would those weak ones who could not defend themselves suffer from this storm? What might be happening to Helena in Rozloga?

But Helena must surely be in Lubni. In his dreams the lieutenant saw her surrounded by friends, flattered by the prince and by the Princess Grizelda, admired by the knights—and pining for her knight who had disappeared somewhere in Sich. But the time would come when the knight would return. Had not Khmyelnitski himself promised him his freedom—and, besides, this Cossack storm-wave would flow on to the very threshold of the Commonwealth. Then it would be broken and all anxiety, all sorrow, all unrest would be at an end.

The storm-wave was indeed moving forward. Khmyelnitski marched on without delay with his forces, expecting to meet the son of the hetman. His power was truly formidable, for with him, in addition to Kshechovski's Smeneovs and the chambuls of Tukhay Bey, he led nearly five and twenty thousand trained soldiers eager for the fray. No positive information had been received of Pototski's fighting strength. Fugitives said that he had two thousand heavy cavalry, and some cannon. Under these circumstances, the issue of the battle

might be doubtful, for an attack by those dreadful Hussars was often sufficient to exterminate a force of ten times their number. Khodkievich, the hetman of Lithuania, had once, in his time with three thousand cavalry crushed to the earth eighteen thousand picked men of infantry and Swedish cavalry at Kirchholm, and one squadron of cuirassiers had scattered with wild fury several thousand English and Scotch mercenaries at Klushin. Khmyelnitski was aware of this; therefore according to the words of the Russian chronicler, he proceeded slowly and carefully with the many eyes of his understanding, looking around him on all sides like a crafty hunter, and posting his sentries at a distance of a mile and more from the camp.[1]

He was approaching the Zolta Woda. Two more informers were captured. They confirmed the report of the weakness of the king's army, and brought word that the Castellan had already crossed the Zolta Woda. When Khmyelnitski heard this, he halted, and remained as if rooted to the spot, surrounding himself with earthworks.

His heart beat joyfully. If Pototski ventured on an assault he would be beaten. The Cossacks could not stand in the open field against cuirassiers, but they fought excellently behind earthworks, and as they had such an overwhelming superiority of numbers they would undoubtedly repulse their assailants. Khmyelnitski depended upon Pototski's youth and inexperience, but the young Castellan was accompanied by an experienced warrior, the starosta of Zyviets, Pan Stephen Charnyetski, colonel of the hussars. He appreciated the danger and persuaded the Castellan to return across the Zolta Woda. There was nothing for Khmyelnitski to do but to follow him. On the following day after they had crossed the Zolta Woda, the two opposing forces stood face to face.

But neither of the leaders would make the first attack. Khmyelnitski's camp began hastily to surround itself with earthworks. It was Saturday, the fifth of May, a pouring rain fell, and continued the whole day; the sky was so completely covered with clouds that it was quite dark at midday, as on a day in winter. Towards evening the rain fell more heavily. Khmyelnitski rubbed his hands for joy.

"If the steppes only become soft," he said to Skshetuski, "I will not hesitate to undertake an engagement with the hussars, for they would sink in the mud in their heavy armor.

[1] Samoil Welichk.

And the rain streamed and streamed down, as if Heaven had come to the aid of the Zaporojians.

The army intrenched itself slowly and gloomily amid the pouring rain. No fire would burn. Some thousand Cossacks went out to prevent the Polish army from escaping under the protection of the mist. Then followed a deep silence; nothing was heard save the splashing of the rain and the sighing of the wind; no one slept in either camp.

The following morning the bugles in the Polish camp sounded long and plaintively, as if they were calling to the attack. Then drums began to beat here and there. A sad, dark, wet day broke. A storm-wind arose, but a fine steady rain continued to fall as if through a sieve.

Khmyelnitski commanded a cannon to be fired. This was followed by a second, a third, a tenth, and, as the usual "communications" by means of cannon had begun between the two camps, Skshetuski said to his Cossack protector:

"Zakhar, lead me to the intrenchment that I may see what is going on?"

Zakhar himself was inquisitive and therefore offered no opposition. They went to a high corner from which one could see clearly and distinctly the somewhat sunken valley of the steppes, the swamp of the Zolta Woda water, and both armies. But hardly had Skshetuski cast a glance over the country when he put both hands to his head and cried:

"By the living God, that is only a vanguard, nothing more."

In truth, the fortifications of the Cossack camp were almost a mile and a quarter in extent, while those of the Poles in comparison looked like nothing more than a redoubt. The inequality of strength was so great that a Cossack victory appeared certain.

Skshetuski's heart was heavy. The hour had not yet come for the downfall of pride and insurrection, but now a new triumph was at hand, so at least it seemed.

The skirmishing had already begun by the firing of the cannon from the elevation, single horsemen or small bodies of horsemen could be seen in hand-to-hand conflict. These were the Tartars, who were fighting with Pototski's Semenovs, dressed in dark blue and yellow. The horsemen attacked each other and then fell back, attacked each other's flank, shot at one another with pistols or bows, or sought to entrap one another with lariats. These skirmishes, observed from a distance, seemed like play, and it was only when a riderless horse

was seen plunging about that one knew that life and death were in the balance.

The Tartars poured forth in ever increasing numbers; the ground was soon black with their dense swarms; then fresh regiments came out from the Polish camp and drew up in order of battle before the entrenchment. It was so near that Skshetuski, with his sharp eye, could distinctly see the colors, the bunchuks, even the corporals, and the lieutenants who sat on horseback a little to one side of the companies.

His heart began to beat with excitement, his pale face to take on some color and, as if he could find ready listeners in Zakhar and the Cossacks who were at the cannon and beside the corner, he cried, exultingly, and still more exultingly, the nearer the squadrons approached the entrenchment:

"Those are Ballabans dragoons whom I saw in Cherkass!"

"That is a Wallachian regiment! They have a cross on their colors!"

"Ah! here comes the infantry from the ramparts!"

Then he cried in still greater excitement and, stretching out his hands:

"The hussars! Pan Charnyetski's hussars!"

The hussars had indeed appeared, and above them a cloud of birds, and a forest of lances, ornamented with gold tassels, and long green and black pennants. They came riding forward six abreast and pulled up before the earthworks, and, at the sight of their calmness, their dignity, and their skill, tears of joy came into Skshetuski's eyes and dimmed his sight, for a while. Although the forces were so unevenly matched, although these few regiments were opposed to a whole phalanx of Zaporojians and Tartars who, as usual, formed in wings, although their ranks extended so far into the steppes that one could hardly see the end of them, Skshetuski yet believed in victory. His face beamed, his strength returned, his eyes flashed as he looked towards them and he could hardly contain himself.

"Ha! child," growled old Zakhar, "thy soul would like to enter Paradise."

Meanwhile a few scattered Tartar divisions had plunged forward with shouts and cries of "Allah!" They answered them from the camp with shots, but the attack was only a threat. The Tartars before reaching the Polish squadrons retreated in the direction of their own forces and disappeared in the crowd.

Then sounded the great drum of Sich, and at its call a gigantic semicircle of Cossacks and Tartars moved forward. Khmyelnitski was evidently trying to see if he could not, with one stroke, crush those regiments and occupy the camp. In case of a wild retreat, it would be possible, but such an event did not seem probable among the Polish regiments. They stood calm, spread out in a tolerably long line with the earthworks at their back and the cannons on their flank so that they could be only attacked from the front. For a moment it looked as if they were going to receive the attack, but when the crescent had covered half the field the trumpets in the intrenchments sounded for attack—and the array of lances which, up to this time had been raised in the air were lowered to the level of the horses heads.

"The hussars are attacking," cried Skshetuski.

They had crouched in their saddles and galloped forward, and immediately behind them came the dragoons, and the whole line of battle.

The assault of the hussars was terrific. In the first attack they fell upon three kurzens, those of Steblovski and that of Mirohorodzki, and annihilated them in an instant. The shouts and cries came to Skshetuski's ears, horses and men who had been overthrown by the gigantic force of the iron riders fell like blades of wheat before the breath of the storm. The resistance lasted so short a time that it seemed to Skshetuski as if some gigantic dragon had swallowed the three regiments at a gulp. The horses, terrified by the noise of the birds, carried terror into the ranks of the Zaporojians. The regiments of Irkleyevski, Kalmbolotski, Minski, Sshuryski, and Titorovski became completely demoralized as the swarm of fugitives rushed among them, and began to retreat in disorder. Meanwhile hussars had called up the assistance of the dragoons and with them, began a bloody slaughter. The kurzen of Vasyurynski took to flight, after an obstinate but short resistance, and fled in wild terror to the very intrenchments and, transformed into disorderly masses, pursued, slashed with swords, pressed upon by the iron onset, they could not gain a moment in which to restore order.

"Devils! not Poles!" cried old Zakhar.

Skshetuski was half delirious; he was ill and could not control himself, so that he laughed and cried at the same time, and screamed out the word of command as if he were himself leading a regiment. Zakhar held him by the coat, and called others to assist him.

The fighting was so close to the Cossack camp that one could almost distinguish the faces of the soldiers. The cannon roared from the breast-works, but the Cossack balls, which reached friend as well as foe, only increased the confusion. The hussars had forced their way to the kurza of Paschkovski which formed the hetmans guard, and in the middle of which was Khmyelnitski himself. Suddenly a frightful yell arose from the ranks of the Zaporojians. The great red banner wavered and fell. But at this moment Kshechovski with his five thousand men, rushed into the fight. He dashed, on his immense sorrel horse, into the front rank, without a cap, his sword held above his head, and reformed the scattered Nijovs. As they saw help approaching they turned, although in disorder, to renew the attack. The battle raged again in the centre of the line.

Khmyelnitski's luck failed him on both wings.

The Tartars, thanks to the Wallachian regiment and Pototski's Semenovs, who had twice repulsed them, had completely lost their courage. Tukhay Bey had had two horses killed under him; the victory was finally inclining toward the side of young Pototski.

But the fight did not last much longer. The rain, which had grown more heavy, had now become such a downpour that one could not see through the streams of water. No longer drops but perfect torrents poured on the earth from the flood-gates of Heaven. The steppes were transformed into a lake. It became so dark, that one could not see another at a distance of a few steps. The noise of the rain drowned the voices of command. The damp muskets and guns were silent. Heaven itself seemed to put an end to the slaughter.

Khmyelnitski, wet to the skin and mad with rage, plunged into his camp, and spoke not a word to any one. They made him a tent of camel-skins, beneath which he might take shelter. Here he sat alone, given over to gloomy thoughts.

Despair had taken possession of him. Now only did he realize what an undertaking he had on hand. Beaten, repulsed, and defeated in a fight with such a small opposing force that one might with justice consider them merely a vanguard, he knew how immense was the power of resistance of the army of the Commonwealth and had taken it into account when he undertook the war; and yet he had miscalculated. So, at least, it seemed to him at this moment, and he seized his close shaven head as if he would dash it against the

first cannon that same in his way. How would it be when he had to encounter the forces of the Hetman and of the whole Commonwealth?

The entrance of Tukhay Bey interrupted his thoughts.

The eyes of the Tartar gleamed with rage, his face was white, his teeth glistened betwen his hairless lips.

"Where are the men, where are the prisoners, where are the heads of the generals, where is the victory?" he asked in a hoarse voice.

Khmyelnitski sprang from his seat.

"Yonder," he cried with a voice of thunder and pointed in the direction of the royal camp.

"Then go thither," growled Tukhay Bey, and if you will not go, I will lead you with a rope to the Crimea."

"I will go," said Khmyelnitski. "This very day I will go! I will fetch soldiers, I will fetch prisoners; but you must render the Khan an account, for you demand prisoners and are afraid of the battle."

"Dog," howled Tukhay Bey, "you are sending the Khan's army to destruction."

They stood thus a moment, facing each other, gasping with rage. Khmyelnitski first regained his calmness.

"Tukhay Bey be quiet," said he. "The rain has interrupted the fight just as the dragoons had overpowered Kshechovski. I know them. To-morrow they will fight with less energy. The steppes will be more marshy. The hussars will succomb. To-morrow, all will be ours."

"You have said it," muttered Tukhay Bey.

"And I will keep my word. Tukhay Bey, my friend, the Khan sent you to assist me, not to torment me."

"You promised victories, not defeats."

"They have taken some of the dragoons prisoners, I will give them to you."

"Give them to me, I will have them impaled."

"Do not do that, let them go free. They are soldiers from the Ukraine, of Balaban's squadron; I will send them over that they may bring the dragoons over to our side. It will be just as it was with Kshechovski."

Tukhay Bey grew calm: he looked at Khmyelnitski sharply and said:

"Serpent!" . . .

"Craft is worth as much as courage. If I can persuade the dragoons to desert, not one man will escape me! Do you understand?

"I will have Pototski."

"You shall have him—also Charnyetski."

"And now give me some gorzalka, for it is cold!"

"All right!"

At this moment in stepped Kshechovski. The colonel was as gloomy as night. The starostships, the dignities, castles and treasures of his dreams had, after the day's fight, become veiled in a fog. To-morrow they might completely vanish, and out of that fog might arise in their place the hangman's rope or the gallows. Had he not, by killing the Germans who belonged to the hetman, burned all his bridges behind him, he would most certainly have reflected how he might now betray Khmyelnitski and go over with his soldiers into Pototski's camp.

But that was now impossible.

They all three sat down to the big bottle of gorzalka and began to drink in silence. The noise of the rain subsided gradually. It was twilight.

Skshetuski exhausted with joy, weak and pale, lay motionless in the wagon. Zakhar, who had learned to like him, commanded the Cossacks to spread a felt canopy over him. The lieutenant heard the melancholy patter of the rain, but in his soul all was bright, happy, and full of light. His hussars had shown what they could do, his Commonwealth had offered a resistance worthy of her majesty. The first assault of the Cossacks had been shattered by the lances of the king's army. And the hetmans were still there; and Prince Yeremy and so many forces, so many noblemen, so much power; and over all these the king—chief among peers.

Skshetuski's bosom rose with pride as if he felt all these powers in himself. At this moment he experienced for the first time since the day he lost his freedom in Sich, a certain feeling of sympathy for the Cossacks: They were in the wrong, but blind when they ventured to attack the sun with mattocks. They were in the wrong, but unfortunate in having allowed themselves to be led away by a man who was leading them into evident destruction.

His thoughts then wandered farther? Peace would come and then each one would have a right to think of his own personal happiness. At this moment his soul and mind were in Rozloga. There in the vicinity of the lion's den, it would be quiet as in poppy-land; there the insurrection would never raise its head and, should it do so—Helena would undoubtedly be already in Lubni.

Suddenly the thunder of cannon interrupted the golden thread of his thoughts.

Khmeylnitski had drunk himself full and was leading his regiments again to the attack.

But it amounted to nothing more than thunder of cannon. Kshechovski restrained the hetman.

The following day was Sunday. It passed quietly without a shot being fired. The camps lay opposite each other, like those of two allied armies.

Skshetuski attributed this quiet to the disaffection of the Cossacks. "Alas! He did not know that Khmyelnitski, during this interval, was "looking around him with the numerous eyes of his mind" and was doing his best to entice Balaban's dragoons over to his side. On Monday at early dawn the fight began afresh. Skshetuski watched it as before, with a smiling, beaming face. Once more, the royal troops advanced from the entrenchment, but this time did not undertake an attack but opposed the enemy from where they stood. The steppes were not only soft on the surface, as on the first day of the fight, but the rain had soaked through to some depth. The heavy cavalry could hardly move and at first this gave the agile Zaporojian and Tartar regiments the advantage. Gradually the smile disappeared from Skshetuski's lips. The mass of the assailants almost completely covered the earthworks of the Poles. It seemed as if every moment that barrier would be broken and the assault inevitably begin on the ramparts. Skshetuski observed that the regiments did not fight with half the courage or half the eagerness that they had shown the first day. They defended themselves obstinately, however, but they did not attack as fiercely as the kurzens; they did not make a clean sweep of the field like a hurricane. The ground of the steppes which was soaked through and through had weakened their power and really banished the heavy cavalry behind the entrenchments. The impetus which gave them courage and decided the victory was wanting, and to-day they were obliged to stay still, inactive. Khmyelnitski however continued to lead new kurzens to the attack. He, himself, was everywhere. He, himself, led every kurzen to the attack and only retreated before the swords of the enemy. His zeal infected even the Zaporojians and although they fell in dense masses, they ran like a storm-wind against the earthworks with screams and howls. They plunged against the wall of iron

breasts, against the points of their lances, and retreated again covered with sword-cuts and decimated. Under these assaults the regiments began to waver, to melt away and here and there to retreat as a wrestler clutched in the iron arms of an opponent becomes weaker and again struggles and regains strength.

Before noon almost all the fighting strength of the Zaporojians was under fire and in the battle. The battle raged so fiercely that between the two opposing forces a new rampart had been formed, a rampart made of the corpses of men and horses.

At every moment, there came back to the Cossack entrenchment, swarms of bandaged, bleeding, mud-covered, panting, exhausted warriors. But they came back with songs on their lips; on their features glowed warlike courage and a certainty of victory; even as they sank powerless to the earth they cried: "On to death!" The garrison which remained behind in the camp was yearning for the fray.

Skshetuski was sad. The Polish squadrons began to disappear from the field behind their fortifications. They could hold out no longer, and one noticed the feverish haste of their retreat. At this sight some twenty thousand voices shouted joyfully: The attack was renewed with double vigor. The Zaporojians sprang upon the necks of Pototski's Semenovs who covered the retreat.

But the cannon and the rain of musket bullets repulsed them. The fighting ceased for a time. In the Polish camp was heard the sound of the parley trumpet that called a truce.

Khmyelnitski, however, did not wish to parley. Twelve Kurzens dismounted in order to unite with the infantry and the Tartars in storming the breastworks of the Poles.

Kshechovski was to hasten to their assistance with three thousand infantry at the decisive moment. All the kettle-drums, triangles, and trumpets began to sound at one time and drowned the shouts and salvos of musketry.

Skshetuski looked tremblingly at the deep ranks of the incomparable Zaporojian infantry that dashed towards the ramparts and surrounded them in a narrowing circle. Long streaks of white smoke poured forth on them from the earthworks as if a giant breath would blow away the grasshoppers which swarmed on all sides. The cannon balls ploughed furrows in their ranks. The report of firearms was more frequent. The thunder of the cannon was unceasing. His

eyes filled with tears. Here and there the ranks of assailants twitched convulsively like a wounded snake, but they continued their attack. Already they have reached the goal! Already they are at the breastworks! The cannon can no longer hurt them! Skshetuski closes his eyes.

And now, like lightning, the question flashed through his mind "Should he, when he opened his eyes, still see Polish standards on the breastworks? Would he see them—would he not see them?" The tumult increased and an unusual noise was heard. Had something happened. From the midst of the camp came cries. "What is that? What has happened?"

"Almighty God!"

This cry escaped Skshetuski's lips as he opened his eyes and, instead of the huge golden standard of the king he saw the red flag with the archangel. The camp had been taken. It was not till evening that he learned from Zakhar the details of the battle. It was not for nothing that Tukhay Bey had called Khmyelnitski "serpent," for just at the moment of the most obstinate resistance the Balaban dragoons had been persuaded to go over to the Cossacks; had hurled themselves upon the rear of their own regiments and helped to destroy them even to the last man.

In the evening, Skshetuski saw the prisoners and was present at the death of young Pototski, whose throat was pierced by an arrow.

He lived only a few hours after the battle and died in Stephen Charnyetski's arms.

"Tell my father," whispered the young Castellan in his dying moments, "Tell my father that I . . . as a knight . ."

He could say no more, his soul left his body and flew to Heaven. It was long before Skshetuski forgot that pale face and those blue eyes, directed to Heaven in the moment of death. Charnyetski made this vow over the cold corpse, that if God gave him back his freedom he would wash away the insult of captivity and revenge the death of his friend in streams of blood; but not a tear flowed down his stern face; for he was a knight of iron, celebrated for his brave deeds and uncrushed by any misfortune. He fulfilled his vow. He did not give way to despair, but consoled Skshetuski, who suffered torture at the defeat and ignominy of the Commonwealth. "The Commonwealth has suffered many defeats," said Charnyetski, "but she has an irresistible strength in her-

"ALMIGHTY GOD" .... ESCAPED FROM SKSHETUSKI'S LIPS.
With Fire and Sword.

self. No power hitherto has broken her and the insurrection of the peasants, which God himself will punish, will not break her, for they are opposing themselves to His will when they rise against their superiors, and the defeat—it is sad, certainly, but who has suffered this defeat? The hetmans? The king's army? No! After the desertion and treachery of Kshechovski, the division which Pototski commanded could only be looked upon as a vanguard. The rebellion will undoubtedly spread over the whole Ukraine, for the peasants there are insolent and ready for war but this rebellion is not the first. The hetmans and Prince Yeremy, whose power has hitherto remained untouched, will crush it. The greater the strength with which it breaks forth, the longer it will slumber once it is crushed—perhaps forever. They must indeed be of little faith and weak hearts who could believe that any Cossack leader, in company with one Tartar Murza, could really threaten a mighty people. It would go hard with the Commonwealth if an ordinary uprising of the peasantry should decide her fate and her right to exist. Truly we undertook this war in a spirit of contempt," concluded Charnyetski, "and although our vanguard is annihilated, I believe that it is not with the sword, that the hetmans will suppress it nor with weapons, but with the lash."

And as he thus spoke, it was not as if a prisoner were speaking, or a soldier who had been conquered, but a proud hetman who is confident of victory on the following day. This greatness of soul and his firm faith in the Commonwealth, fell like balm upon the wounds of the lieutenant. He saw Khmyelnitski's might so close, so near, that it blinded him a little, and all the more because, up to this time the results had been favorable to him, but Charnyetski must be right. The fighting strength of the hetmans was still untouched, and behind them was the whole power of the Commonwealth and therefore the power of right and of God's will. The lieutenant went away consequently with his soul strengthened and cheerful, and, as he went, he asked Charnyetski if he would not soon negotiate with Khmyelnitski for his freedom.

"I am Tukhay Bey's prisoner," said Stephen, "I will pay him my ransom, but I will have nothing to do with that leader of the Cossacks. I would send him to the gallows."

Zakhar, who had arranged this meeting between the prisoners and Skshetuski, when leading him back to the wagon, also tried to comfort him on the way.

"They did not have any difficulty with young Pototski," he said, "but they will have trouble with the hetmans. The work is only begun and what the end will be—God only knows. Yes, the Cossacks and the Tartars have taken a quantity of Polish property, but to take and to keep are two different things. And you, child, do not worry, do not despair you will gain your freedom, you will return to your own people, and the old man will mourn for you. It is hard in one's old age to be all alone in the world. It will be more difficult with the hetmans, ah! more difficult!"

In fact this victory, although it was a brilliant one, did not in any way decide the struggle in Khmyelnitski's favor; it might, indeed, tell against him; for it was easy to foresee that the Grand Hetman, to avenge the death of his son, would proceed with especial ferocity against the Zaporojians, and would leave nothing undone to annihilate them once and for all. The Grand Hetman had a certain grudge against Prince Yeremy which although it was concealed by politeness, nevertheless came to the surface on various occasions. Khmyelnitski knew this well and also judged that Pan Cracovski would now lay aside this grudge, and reach forth the hand of fellowship to the prince, in order to assure himself of the assistance of the celebrated warrior and his mighty army. And with the united forces under such a leader as the prince Khmyelnitski dared not measure himself, for as yet he had not sufficient confidence in himself. He resolved therefore to hasten at the same time as the news of the defeat should reach the hetman, to cross the Zolta Woda into the Ukraine and attack the hetman before the prince could come to his assistance.

He allowed his forces, therefore, no rest and the morning following the battle they were already on the march. He made his preparations as quickly as if he were pursuing the hetman. It seemed as if a deluge were flooding the steppes and were hurrying forward and gathering all the waters in its course. They passed forests, woods, hills; without halting, they crossed the rivers. The fighting power of the Cossacks was increased on their journey, for new crowds of peasants who had fled from the Ukraine joined themselves to their ranks. The peasants also brought news of the hetmans, but they contradicted one another. Some said that the prince was already on the other side of the Dnieper, others maintained that he had already joined the Royal forces but all

agreed that the Ukraine was in flames. The peasants were not only fleeing to Khmyelnitski in the Wild Lands, but they also set fire to villages and towns, attacked their masters, and armed themselves generally. The king's army had been fighting for two weeks. Steblev was taken; near Derenhov a bloody battle had been fought. The Cossacks from the towns had, in several places, already joined the side of the "blacks" and were waiting everywhere to enlist. Khmyelnitski had counted on all this and he hastened all the more.

Finally he stood on the threshhold. Chigrin opened her gates to him; the Cossack garrison at once joined his standard; Chaplinski's house was stormed; a number of the nobility who had taken refuge in the town were slaughtered. Cries of joy, ringing of bells, and processions did not cease for a moment; the whole neighborhood was in flames; everyone seized scythes and pikes and united with the Zaporojians; the countless crowds of country people streamed into the camp from all directions. Joyful and certain news had been brought that Prince Yeremy had offered his assistance to the Hetman but had not yet joined him.

Khmyelnitski breathed more freely.

He rode forward without delay and marched through with rebellion, slaughter and fire on his way. This might be seen by the corpses and ashes on the road. He moved along like an avalanche crushing everything in his way. The land had become a desert after he had passed through it; he moved onward like an avenging angel; like the dragon in the legend, his steps pressed blood from the ground; his breath was a breath of flame.

In Cherkass he halted with the main body of the army and sent forward the Tartars under Tukhay Bey, and the wild Kshyvonos, to attack the hetmans at Korsun and they attacked them without delay. But they paid dearly for their rashness. Repulsed, decimated, almost annihilated, they were forced to retreat in disorderly flight.

Khmyelnitski hastened to their assistance. On the way he received news that Sienyavski had gone over with several regiments to the hetmans, who had left Korsun and had gone on to Boguslav. The news was true. Khmyelnitski took Korsun without any opposition, and the wagons, supplies, in one word, the entire camp, and hurried after them along the great highway.

It did not take long to overtake them as they had not gone

far. At Kruta Balka, his advance guards came upon the first Polish encampment.

It was not permitted to Skshetuski to see this battle, for he remained in Korsun with the baggage. Zakhar brought him to the market-place, into Zabokshytski's house—the "blacks" had already hanged its owner, and placed a guard made up from the remnant of the camp of Mirgorod in front of it, for the mob plundered the houses continually and murdered everybody they suspected of being Poles. Through the broken windows, Skshetuski saw swarms of drunken, blood-thirsty peasants with rolled-up sleeves going from house to house, from cellar to cellar, peering in all corners and attics. From time to time a frightful noise announced that a nobleman, a Jew, a man, or a woman had been found. They would drag the victim to the market-place and rage around him with the most frightful fury. The mob fought with one another for portions of the corpse smeared their faces with blood in wild delight and hung the still reeking entrails round their necks. The peasants seized little Jewish boys by their feet and tore them asunder amid the mad laughter of the crowd. They threw themselves also upon the houses that were guarded by sentries where distinguished prisoners were kept, who had been allowed to live because large ransoms were expected for them. But the Zaporojians or Tartars who were keeping watch repulsed the mob and knocked them on the head with pikes, bows, or with ox-hide thongs. All this was going on before the house in which Skshetuski was a prisoner. Zakhar commanded that the peasants should be beaten without mercy and the Mirgorodians obeyed the command with delight, for the Nijovs accepted the assistance of the country people in time of war, but they despised them immeasurably more than they did the nobility. Were they not called the aristocratic Cossacks? Khmyelnitski himself had more than once given a considerable number of the country people to the black Tartars that they might drive them into the Crimea and from thence to Turkey and Asia Minor and sell them.

The mob raged, therefore, upon the market place and their madness rose to such a pitch that they finally began to kill each other. The day was declining. One whole side of the market-place, the Greek church, and the house of the priest were set on fire. Fortunately, the wind blew the flames towards the country and prevented the spread of the fire, but

the immense blaze lighted up the market as brightly as sunlight. It became unbearably warm and from the distance came the terrible thundering of cannon—the fight at Kruta Balka was evidently growing more fierce.

"Our men must be getting quite warm over there," growled old Zakhar, "the hetmans are not at play, Pan Pototski is an able soldier."

Then he pointed through the window at the "Blacks." "See," he said, "they are rioting now but when Khmyelnitski is killed we will 'down' even them!"

At this moment the sound of tramping horses was heard and several dozens of foam-flecked horses with their riders plunged into the market-place. Their faces were black from the powder; their clothing in disorder, and their heads bound up in rags showed that they had just returned from the fight.

"All those who believe in God, save themselves! The Poles are slaying us," they cried with loud voices.

Noise and confusion ensued. The crowd surged hither and thither, like the waves lashed by a storm. Suddenly a wild terror took possession of them. A disordered flight began and, as the streets were already choked with wagons and a portion of the market-place was on fire, they knew not which way to turn. The "blacks" began to press on one another, to scream, to fight, and to howl for mercy, although the enemy was still at a distance.

When the lieutenant heard what was happening he became wild with joy, ran up and down the room as if he were crazy, beat his breast with both hands, with all his might, and cried:

"I knew that this would happen: I knew it, as sure as I live! Now they have to do with the hetmans, now with the whole Commonwealth. The hour of chastisement has come! What is that?"

Again was heard the sound of trampling horses and, this time, some hundred horsemen, mostly Tartars, appeared on the market-place. They had evidently fled blindly. The mob got in their road; they plunged into the mob, rode madly over them; beat them, hunted them, slashed them out of the way with their swords and dashed forward with their horses, on to the highway that led to Cherkass.

"They are flying like the storm-wind," said Zakhar.

The words had hardly been spoken when a second division came by, and a third. The flight seemed to be general. The sentries before the houses began to become impatient and

also showed a desire to run away. Zakhar dashed through the porch.

"Halt!" he cried to his Mirgorodians.

The smoke, the heat, the confusion, the tramping of horses, the noise of the fire, the howling of the mob all blended together i the glow of the flames in a hellish spectacle on which the lieutenant looked from his window.

"What a rout it must have been! What a rout!" he cried to Zakhar without considering that Zakhar could not share his joy.

Then another division of fugitives shot by like lightning.

The thundering of cannon shook the foundations of the houses of Korsun.

Suddenly a dreadful voice, close to the house, began to cry:

"Save yourselves, Khmel is slain! Kshechovski is slain! Tukhay Bey is slain!"

Upon the market place it seemed as if 't might be the end of the world. Men plunged madly into the flames. The lieutenant sank on his knees and lifted his hands to Heaven.

"Almighty God! Great and just God! Honor be to thee in the height!"

Zakhar interrupted this prayer by springing into the room:

"Oh, child!" he cried, gasping for breath, "come out and promise pardon to the Mirgorodians, for they want to run away—and if they fly, the 'blacks' will dash into th house."

Skshetuski went on the balcony. The Mirogodians were pacing uneasily up and down and showed an unmistakable wish to leave their watch, and to hasten to the highway which lead to Cherkass. Terror had seized every one i the town. Now and then crowds of fugitives came by, as if on wings from Kruta Balka. All fled in the greatest confusion; peasants, Tartars, Cossacks of the towns, and Zaporojians. And yet Khmyelnitski must still be making resistance; the battle could not be decided, for the cannon thundered with redoubled might.

Skshetuski addressed the Mirogodians.

"As you," he began with a loud voice, "have faithfully guarded my person, you need not save yourselves by flight. I assure you of my protection, and favor with the hetman."

The Mirgorodians uncovered their heads, to the last man, Skshetuski, however, placed his hands on his hips and looked proudly at them, and across the market-place, which had become more and more deserted. What a turn of fate! Skshetu-

ski, not long before, a prisoner who was dragged along with the Cossack troops, now stood among that bold Cossack crowd like a master among his subjects; like a nobleman among the common people; like a Cuirassier among camp-followers. He, the prisoner, now promised mercy—and heads were uncovered at sight of him and humble voices cried in a tone of gloomy terror and submission:

"Have mercy, sir!"

"As I have said, so will it be."

His promise was indeed safe as regards the hetman to whom he was well known, for he had frequently taken him letters from Prince Yeremy and knew how to win his favor. He stood there, his hands on his hips, and joy beamed on his countenance that was lighted up by the glow of the fire.

"Thus the war is at an end! Thus the wave has broken on the threshold," he thought. Charnyetski was right; the power of the Commonwealth is impregnable; her might cannot be shaken.

At these thoughts, his breast filled with pride, but it was not the unworthy pride which arose from a satisfied thirst for vengeance, from the humbling of his enemies, nor from the restoration of his freedom, which he hoped for before long; and not because people uncovered their heads before him—no, he was proud to think he was a son of this victorious Commonwealth, of this mighty power, at whose gates all wickedness, all assault, all treachery was brought to naught and shattered as are the powers of Hell at the gate of Heaven. He was proud as a noble patriot, that he had been strengthened when in doubt and had not been decieved in his faith. Vengeance he no longer desired. "She crushes like a queen, she forgives like a mother," he thought.

Meanwhile, the sound of cannon was changed into an uninterrupted thunder. Again the noise of tramping horses was heard in the deserted streets. A Cossack riding bareback dashed like lightning into the market place, bareheaded, in his shirt-sleves, and with battered, bleeding face. He checked his steed, sprang to the ground, spread out his hands, opened his mouth to take a deep breath, and began to shout:

"Khmel is beating the Poles! The great lords are all killed! The hetmans, the colonels, the knights, and the cavaliers!"

No sooner had he spoken, than he reeled and fell to the ground. The Mirgorodians hastened to his assistance.

Color and pallor alternated in Skshetuski's face.

"What does he say?" he asked feverishly of Zakhar. "What has happened? It cannot be! By the living God, it cannot be!"

All was still. . . . Only the flames hissed across from the opposite side of the market-place. Sheaves of sparks flew, and gutted houses fell together with a crash.

Fresh riders appeared.

The Poles are beaten! Beaten!

A division of Tartars followed them. They rode slowly, for they were surrounding some men on foot; evidently prisoners. Skshetuski could not believe his eyes. He recognized in the prisoners the uniform of the hetman of the Hussars, he clasped his hands and repeated in a strange, hoarse voice:

"It cannot be· it cannot be!"

Still was heard the thunder of cannon, the fight was not over, but in all the streets that the fire had not reached, swarms of Zaporojians and Tartars were pouring. Their faces were black; they breathed hard; but they sang songs as if they were intoxicated. Thus do soldiers return after victory.

The lieutenant grew as pale as a corpse.

"It cannot be," he repeated hoarsely, it cannot be . . . the Commonwealth. . . . . "

A new object attracted his attention.

Kshechovski's Semenovs came along, bearing a number of flags. They came riding into the middle of the market-place and threw them on the ground.

Alas! Alas! they were Polish flags!

The thunder of cannon grew fainter in the distance, the clatter of approaching wagons was heard. First came a high Cossack telega, then came a number of others, all surrounded by Cossacks of the Pashkov kurzen, wearing yellow caps. They passed close before the house where stood the Mirgorodians. Skshetuski placed his hand to his forehead, for the glow of the fire blinded him and looked closely at the forms of the prisoners who sat in the first carriage. Suddenly, he stepped back, threw up his arms like a man whose breast is pierced by an arrow, and, from his mouth came a frightful, unearthly cry:

"Jesus Maria! it is the hetmans!"

And he sank into Zakhar's arms, a mist covered his eyes, his face became set and cold as death.

Shortly after that three horsemen at the head of innumer-

able regiments rode into the market-place of Korsun. The man in the middle, dressed in red, sat upon a white horse, his hand on the gold field-marshal's baton at his side, and looked proudly before him, like a king.

It was Khmyelnitski. At either side of him rode Tukhay Bey and Kshechovski.

The Commonwealth lay in dust and blood at the feet of the Cossacks!

CHAPTER XVI.

Some days had passed. It seemed to the people as though the arch of heaven had suddenly fallen and crushed the Commonwealth. The Zolta Woda, Korsun, the destruction of the royal army which had hitherto ever been victorious in the wars with the Cossacks, the capture of the hetmans, the terrific fires that were devastating the whole Ukraine, carnage, murders, such as one had never yet heard of since the world began; all this had come upon them so suddenly, that men could hardly believe that so much evil could happen to a country at one time. Many would not believe it; others were stunned with horror; others again lost their reason or prophesied the coming of Anti-Christ and the approach of the Last Judgment. All bonds of brotherhood, all human and family relations were dissolved, all authority ceased; the differences in rank between men had disappeared; Hell had unchained all crimes, and let them loose on the world, that they might revel to their hearts' content; murder, robbery, breach of faith, brutal acts of violence, animal-like rage took the place of labor, honor, faith, and conscience. It seemed as if humanity, from this time forward would exist no longer through goodness, but through wickedness; as if the hearts and minds were transformed, and held as holy what had formerly been considered dishonorable and what was once vile was now holy. The sun no longer illumined the earth, for the smoke of burning towns hid its light; and, at night, instead of the light of the stars and moon, the gleam of flames alone lit up the darkness. Towns, villages, churches, courts, forests went up in flames. Men ceased to speak; they sighed or howled now, as dogs would. Life had lost its value. Thousands perished without a sigh; without leaving a memory, and, amid all these terrors, this lust of murder, these groans, this fire and smoke, one man alone rose higher and higher, grew ever more terrible and giant-like, till he almost blinded the light of day and cast a shadow from sea to sea.

This man was Bogdan Khmyelnitski.

Two hundred thousand men, fully armed, and intoxicated with conquest, stood ready to obey his nod. Everywhere the "blacks," the Cossacks in the towns, united themselves with this army. The country of Pripeth, to the very borders of the desert was in flames. The uprising extended through the Voyovodas of Russia, in Podolia, Volhynia, Bratslav, Kiev, and Chernikov. The power of the hetman grew from day to day. Never had the Commonwealth opposed half the fighting strength to its most dreaded enemy that the hetman now had under him. The German emperor had not such an army at his command. The tempest surpassed all expectation. The Hetman, himself, had at first not recognized, nor understood how mighty he had become. He still shielded himself behind such terms as justice and loyalty to the Commonwealth; for he did not know then that he might trample them underfoot, like so many empty words. But, with this power, there developed in him that boundless, mad egotism that has never been equalled in history. The conception of evil and good, of wrong and right, of injustice and outrage conveyed no meaning to Khmyelnitski's mind except as they conduced to his own welfare or injury. Whosoever took his side appeared to him virtuous; whoever went against him was a criminal. He would have even complained of the sun and considered it an injustice if it had not shone when he needed it. He measured men, circumstances, and the world, with his own "I;" but in spite of all the craft, in spite of all the hypocrisy of the hetman he had an immense faith in himself. From this confidence arose all Khmyelnitski's crimes, but also all his good deeds; for, if he was terrible in his vengeance and cruelty towards enemies, he could yet be grateful for all services that were freely rendered him. Only when he was drunk, did he forget benefits; then he bellowed madly and, with foaming mouth, gave bloody commands that later he repented; and the more his prosperity increased, the more frequently was he drunk, for an ever-increasing restlessness took possession of him. It seemed as if his triumphs had led him to such a height as he himself did not desire. His power inspired others with terror, but also himself. The mighty current of rebellion had seized him, had carried him away with the swiftness of lightning, but whither? How was it all to end? As he had undertaken this insurrection in the name of his own wrongs, this Cossack diplomat might count on it that after the first success, or even after defeat, negotiations would be opened

that would insure his pardon and give him satisfaction and recompense for the injustice and injury done him. He knew the Commonwealth thoroughly; knew her patience, that was boundless as the sea: her mercy that knew neither measure nor bounds; which did not arise merely from weakness; for had she not offered forgiveness to Nalevayka when he was surrounded and overcome? But now, after the victory of Zolta Woda, after the defeat of the hetmans, after the kindling of the insurrection in all the southern Voyevodas, matters had proceeded too far, results had gone beyond all expectations—the conflict must now be carried on for life or death.

And on whose side would the victory remain?

Khmyelnitski asked the soothsayers, read the stars, looked with intense, earnest glance into the future;—but he saw before him only darkness. Therefore a frightful unrest made his hair stand upright on his head and in his breast despair raged like a hurricane. How will it be—how will it be? For Khmyelnitski who saw more clearly than others, understood better than others that the Commonwealth did not utilize her full strength; that she did not know her own might; but that she was nevertheless a giant force. If a man knew how to seize this power with a firm hand, who could withstand him? And who could tell if the fearful danger, the nearness of the abyss, and of destruction, the feuds would not put an end to the internal discords, the private intrigues, the envy of the landholders. the wranglings, the disputes of the Diets, the discord of the nobility, and the impotence of the king? Then half a million of the nobility alone might take the field and crush Khmyelnitski, even if not only the Khan of the Crimea, but also the Turkish Sultan, should come to his assistance.

This latent strength of the Commonwealth was known not only to Khmyelnitski, but also to the late King Vladislav and, therefore, he had striven his whole life long to enter into a war for life or death with the most powerful ruler in the world, for only in this manner could that strength be called to life. In accordance with this conviction, the king had not hesitated to throw a spark into the Cossack gunpowder. Was it indeed reserved for the Cossacks to open the gate to this flood only that it might finally swallow them up?

Khmyelnitski also understood how mighty the power of resistance of the Commonwealth was, in spite of its many weaknesses. Against this disordered, ill-united, insubordinate

Commonwealth, the storm-wave of Turkey, the most threatening of all the powers, had dashed, and had broken upon it as upon a rock. It had been the same at Khotsim, as he had seen almost with his own eyes; yet this Commonwealth, even in the hour of its weakness, had planted its banners on the ramparts of foreign capitals. What resistance would she then not offer, what would she not endure if, seized with despair, she should be given the choice of death or victory?

With this prospect in view, each triumph was fraught with danger to Khmyelnitski; for it brought the moment of the awakening of the sleeping lion ever nearer, and made negotiations more and more impossible. In each victory lay the shadow of a future calamity; in each intoxi ation of success a taste of bitterness. The storm of the Commonwealth would now march forward against the storm of the Cossacks. It seemed to Khmyelnitski as though he already heard its muffled, distant roar.

From Greater Poland (Wielkopolski), from Prussia, from the swarming Masov, from Little Poland (Malopolski), and Lithuania would come hosts of warriors—they needed only a leader.

Khmyelnitski had taken the hetmans prisoners, but in this stroke of luck was an ambush of fate. The hetmans were experienced warriors, but not one of them was such a man as this moment of fear, of horror, and of threatening calamity demanded.

But one man could not take the command.

That man was Prince Yeremy Vishnyovyetski.

And as the hetmans were in captivity the choice would undoubtedly fall on the prince. Khmyelnitski was confident of this as were all others.

Meanwhile there came news to Korsun, where the Zaporojian hetman had called a halt, in order to rest after the last fight, news from beyond the Dnieper that the terrible prince had already gone from Lubni, that on his march he was crushing the rebellion without mercy, that, in his wake, villages, settlements, plantations, and towns had disappeared, and in their place, bloody stakes and gallows lifted their heads. Terror had doubled and trebled the amount of his fighting strength. It was said that he was at the head of fifteen thousand, picked warriors, who had not their superiors in the whole Commonwealth. They expected him hourly in the Cossack camp. Shortly after the fight at Kruta Balka the cry

"Yeremy is coming" had become a watchword among the Cossacks, and spread terror among the "blacks," who fled in the wildest confusion. This terror had caused Khmyelnitski to ponder deeply.

He now had the choice of either moving forward to meet the prince and seeking him beyond the Dnieper or leaving a portion of his forces behind, to conquer the castles of the Ukraine; while he pressed forward into the heart of the Commonwealth.

The advance against the prince was dangerous, and, in spite of his overwhelming forces, Khmyelnitski might suffer defeat in a decisive battle with so celebrated a warrior, and then, everything would be lost forever The "blacks" who formed the immense majority of his forces had given evidence that they would take to flight at the very mention of the name of "Yeremy." Time was needed to transform them into soldiers who could offer a front to the Prince's regiment.

On the other hand, the prince might not care to venture a decisive battle, but might remain satisfied with the defence of his fortified places and with petty engagements, which might last whole months or even years; and, during this time, the Commonwealth would undoubtedly gather fresh forces and come to the assistance of the Prince.

Khmyelnitski resolved to leave Vishnyovyetski beyond the Dnieper, and first strengthen himself in the Ukraine and organize his forces, and then march forth on the Commonwealth, and force her to open negotiations. He counted upon this: that the suppression of the rebellion beyond the Dnieper, alone, would last a long time, and would take all the energies of the prince, and thus leave him a free field. He, himself, undertook to nourish the rebellion beyond the Dnieper, by sending single regiments to aid the "blacks."

Finally, he thought that he might deceive the prince through negotiations and retard him and wait until his strength gradually was dissipated. For this purpose he bethought himself of Skshetuski.

A few days after the victory of Kruta Balka and the day after the general panic, he had Skshetuski brought before him.

He received him in the house of the starosta, in the sole presence of Kshechovski, whom he had previously known. He greeted him kindly, though with a dignity that his present rank demanded, and said:

"Lieutenant Skshetuski, in consideration of the service that you rendered me, I bought you from Tukhay Bey, and promised you your freedom; now the hour has arrived for me to give you a piernach[1] to pass through unhindered if you should meet any of the forces; and also as a guard to protect you from the 'blacks.' You may return to your prince."

Skshetuski was silent, no smile of joy was seen on his face.

"You may set out at once, for I see by your eyes that you do not feel well."

Skshetuski indeed looked like a shadow. His wounds, and the occurrences of the last few weeks, had broken the strength of this young giant youth, who now looked as if he would not live to see the morrow. His face had grown yellow, and his black beard, that had long been unshaven, only increased his miserable appearance. This was the result of his inward torment. The knight worried himself almost to death. A prisoner in the camp of the Cossacks, he had been a witness of all that had happened from the time they had left Sich. He had seen the calamities of the Commonwealth; he had seen the hetmans in slavery; he had witnessed the triumph of the Cossacks; the pyramid that they built up of the heads of their fallen foes; the nobility whom they had hanged; the mutilation of women; the violation of young girls. He had seen the despair of the brave and also the abjectness of fear—he had seen all, suffered all; and suffered all the more keenly because, through breast and brain, the thought pierced like a sword, that he, himself, had been the innocent cause of all this; because it was he, and no other who had rescued Khmyelnitski from the noose. But how could the Christian knight foresee that the assistance that he had rendered his neighbor would bear such fruit. His sorrow was therefore unbounded.

And when he asked himself what was happening to Helena, and when he thought what might happen to her, should an adverse fate detain her in Rozloga, he stretched his hands towards Heaven and cried aloud with a voice in which the deepest despair, even a threat, trembled. "Oh God! take also my soul, for I have suffered more here than I deserve." Soon, however, he would repent that he had blasphemed; then he would fall on his face and pray for succor, for pardon, for mercy for his fatherland, and for that innocent dove who

[1] A Cossack Colonel's baton that took the place of a safe-conduct.

might, at this very moment, be calling in vain on God for assistance. In short, he suffered so much that even the gift of freedom could not bring him any great joy, and this Zaporojian hetman, in his hour of triumph, who wished to be magnanimous towards him and show him mercy awed him no longer. Khmyelnitski's brow wrinkled, and he said:

"Make haste to take advantage of this favor lest I change my mind; for only my own virtue and my confidence in the good cause makes me so incautious as to prepare for myself an enemy, for I know well that you will take up arms against me."

Thereupon Skshetuski answered:

"If God gives me the strength."

And he looked at Khmyelnitski as if he would like to look into the very depths of his soul. The hetman could not endure this glance, but cast his eyes to the ground, and after a few moments of silence, said:

"Well, that does not matter. I am too powerful to pay any attention to such an invalid. You may tell the prince, your master, what you have seen here, and I warn him not to presume too rashly, for, if my patience is exhausted, I will hunt him up beyond the Dnieper country, and I do not know whether my visit would be agreeable to him."

Skshetuski was silent.

"I have said it and repeat it again," continued Khmyelnitski, "that it is not with the Commonwealth, but with the petty princes, that I am carrying on war and the prince takes the first rank among them. He is my enemy and the enemy of the people of Russia; a renegade from our Church and a tyrant. I hear that he is going to put down the rebellion with blood; let him see to it that he does not shed his own."

Then he grew more and more excited, so that the blood rose to his face and his eyes flashed fire. It was evident that he was in such a paroxysm of rage that his consciousness and memory were nearly gone.

"I will have him led with a rope by Kshyvonos," he screamed. "I will put my feet on his neck; I will bind him on his back upon a horse!"

Skshetuski looked at the furious Khmyelnitski from head to foot, and then he answered quietly:

"Conquer him first."

"Illustrious Hetman," said Kshechovski, "let this impudent noble go, for it is not worthy of your dignity that you should

let yourself be carried away by anger against him; and, as you have promised him freedom, he thinks that you must either break your word or listen to his invectives."

Khmyelnitski recovered his calmness, panted for a moment, and said:

"Let him depart, but that he may know that Khmyelnitski rewards kindness with kindness, give him a safe conduct, as I said, and forty Tartars who will take him to the camp."

Then turning to Skshetuski, he added:

"Know thou that we are now quits. I grew to like you, in spite of your temerity, but, if you ever fall into my hands again, you shall not escape."

Skshetuski went out with Kshechovski.

"Since the hetman lets you escape with a whole neck," said Kshechovski, "and you may travel in any direction you desire, I say to you, as we are old friends, take refuge in Warsaw, not beyond the Dnieper, for no man will escape thence with his life. Your day is past. If you were wise you would come over to us, but I know that I am wasting my breath; you would attain a high position as I shall."

"The gallows," growled Skshetuski.

"They would not give me the starostaship of Lityn, now I will not take one, but ten. We will drive away the Princes Konyetspolski, Kalinovski, Pototski, Lubomirski, Vishnyovyetski, Zaslavski, and the whole nobility and divide their goods among us; and, with God's help, that will certainly come to pass, as He has already given us two glorious victories."

Skshetuski did not listen to the Colonel's chatter; he was thinking of something else. The other, however, continued:

"After the battle and our victory, when I saw, in Tukhay Bey's quarters, my master and benefactor, the illustrious, royal hetman, in chains, it pleased him to call me an ingrate and a Judas. I however answered him: 'Sir Voyevoda, I am not an ingrate for when I shall have possession of your castles and your property—promise me only that you will not get drunk—and I will make you my vice-starost!' Ha, Tukhay Bey will get ransom for the birds he has caught—that is why he spares them, otherwise Khmyelnitski and I would treat them differently. But see, the carriage is ready and the Tartars are waiting. In which direction do you wish to travel?"

"To Chigrin."

"As you make your bed so you must lie. The Tartars will take you to Lubni itself if you wish, so the command runs, only take care that your prince does not have them impaled as he would undoubtedly do to the Cossacks! That is why they gave you Tartars. The Hetman has also given you a horse. Farewell, and think kindly of us, and greet the prince for our hetman, and invite him, when he is ready, to come here and submit to Khmyelnitski. Perhaps he will find mercy. Farewell!"

Skshetuski got into the carriage which the Tartars at once surrounded and they set out. The way across the square was not easy, for it was packed with Zaporojians and the "blacks." They were one and all cooking barley, and singing songs about the victory of Zolta Woda and of Korsun, which blind minstrels had composed, who had come in crowds into the camp.

Between the fires, over which hung the kettles containing the porridge, lay corpses of murdered women over whom orgies had taken place in the night, or there rose pyramids of heads which had been cut from the bodies of dead and wounded soldiers after the battle. These corpses and heads were beginning to decay and emited a foul odor which however did not seem to be offensive to the assembled crowd. The town bore traces of the ravages and savage license of the Zaporojians. Windows and doors were torn out, the broken fragments of thousands of articles mixed with straw and feathers were scattered about on the ground of the market place. The eaves of the houses were adorned with hanging forms, mostly Jews, and the crowd amused themesleves here and there by holding on to the feet as they hung, and swinging backwards and forwards.

One side of the market was black with the ruins of burned houses, among them a parish church in which were still seen red embers and smoke. A smell of burning filled the air. Just beyond the burnt houses, stood a tent, which Skshetuski had to pass; and a crowd of prisoners who were guarded by a large number of Tartars. All those who had not been able to save themselves in the vicinity of Chigrin, Cherkass, or Korsun, or had not fallen beneath the axes of the "blacks," were taken prisoners. There were, therefore, soldiers from both battles and inhabitants of the neighborhood who had, hitherto, not joined, or not wished to join the rebellion; men of the higher nobility or of the petty

nobility, vice-starosta officials, colonists, men, women, and children of the poor country squires. One saw no gray-beards, for they were always murdered by the Tartars, for they were of no value, as objects of sale. The Tartars captured entire villages and colonies of the people of Russia and Khmyelnitski did not dare to prevent them. In many places it happened that the men went over to the camp of the Cossacks, and, in return, the Tartars set their cabins on fire and stole their wives and children. But in the midst of the universal license and savagery of all hearts, no one asked about them, no one sought to redress their wrongs. The "blacks" who had taken up arms renounced their native places, their wives and their children. If their wives were taken from them, they took other women of the better class of Poles, and after they had satisfied their lust, they murdered them or sold them to the Tartars. Among the prisoners there was no lack of Ukraine youths, who were tied together in threes or fours with one rope, as were the daughters of the nobility. Slavery and misfortune had destroyed all bariers of caste. The sight of these beings pierced one's soul, and awakened a thirst for vengeance. Dragged from their homes half-naked, the object of the shameless jokes of the pagans, who drove them about on the square; pushed about; beaten, or kissed by those terrible mouths, they lost consciousness, lost will-power. Some sobbed or cried aloud; others with a fixed gaze and bewilderment in their features, with open mouths, resigned themselves to all that might happen. Here and there a prisoner, who was being remorselessly murdered for resistance which he despairingly offered, would scream aloud. In the midst of the crowd of men, one heard the cracking of ox-hide whips that mingled with the cries of pain, the sobbing of children, the bellowing of cattle, and the neighing of horses. The booty had not yet been divided and placed in order, so the greatest confusion prevailed. Wagons, horses, cattle, camels, sheep, women, men, piles of plundered draperiers, utensils, rugs, weapons,—all were thrown together in a great heap and had to be put in order and separated. New swarms of men, and cattle were continually being driven in. Flat bottomed boats, laden to overflowing rowed across the Ros; and from the chief camp new people came out to feast their eyes on the sight of these gathered riches. Some of them, drunk from kumys or gorzalka, clothed in the strangest garments; vestments, sur-

plices, or even in women's dresses, disputed and wrangled about what should fall to their share. Chaban Tartars, who sat upon the ground between the herds amused themselves with playing hideous melodies on pipes, or with throwing dice, or by beating each other with sticks. Packs of dogs who had followed their masters barked and howled piteously.

At length Skshetuski left behind him this inhuman Gehenna, resounding with sighs, tears of misery and the noises of Hell. He thought now he could breathe more freely, but immediately outside the camp another dreadful sight met his eyes. In the distance gleamed the camp, from which was heard continually the neighing of horses; which was filled with thousands of Tartars; but somewhat nearer on the plains, closes to the highway which leads to Cherkass, several young warriors were amusing themselves firing for practice upon the weaker or sick prisoners who could not endure the long journey to the Crimea. Several dozen human corpses had already been thrown on the highway. They were perforated by the arrows, like sieves; many of them still twitched convulsively. The targets for this amusement were suspended from trees which grew along the road, to which they were suspended by their hands. Among them were some old women. A laugh of satisfaction after each successful shot was accompanied by the cry:

"Jaksze iegit—Well done, boys! Uk jakse kol!—the bow is in good hands!"

In the vicinity of the principal camp, thousands of cattle and horses were being prepared for the food of the warriors. The ground was soaked with blood. The oppressive odor of the raw flesh choked one, and, between the heaps of raw meat, blood-smeared Tartars with their knives in their hands wandered to and fro. The day was close, the sun a Hell. It was more than an hour before Skshetuski and his escort came into the open plain, but in the distance the noise and bellowing of the cattle in the camp was heard for a long time. All along the road were traces of devastation. Here and there the ruins of country houses, columns of smoke from burning hamlets, down trodden winter wheat, broken trees, cherry orchards near the cottages cut down for fuel. Upon the highway lay the corpses of horses and men, frightfully mangled, blue and swollen, and above them and over them flocks of ravens and crows, who flew away with a screaming noise at the approach of the horsemen. Khmyelnitski's

bloody deeds forced themselves on one's eyes in all directions, and it was hard to understand against whom this man was raising his hand, for it was his own land that suffered more than all from the burden of misery.

In Mleyov they met fresh swarms of prisoners whom the Tartar divisions were driving before them. The fortress had been burned to the ground, but the fortified clock-tower remained standing and the old oak in the middle of the market-place was covered with dreadful fruit, for on it hung dozens of little Jewish children who had been hanged three days before. A number of noblemen from Konopland, Stavsiela, Vienzovka, Balukleya, and Vodacheva had also been murdered. The tower itself was deserted, for the men had joined Khmyelnitski, and the women, children, and old men had fled into the forests, fearing the arrival of Prince Yeremy's army. Skshetuski proceeded from here to Smila, Zabotyn, and Novosielta to Chigrin, stopping on the way only long enough to rest the horses. The following day at noon he drove into the town. War had spared it. A few houses only were destroyed. Among these that of Chaplinski was levelled to the ground. In the fortress, Lieutenant-Colonel Naokolo-Palets, together with a thousand Cossacks were living in the greatest terror, for here, as elsewhere on the road, it was generally believed that the prince might come at any moment and take such vengenance as the world had never witnessed. It was not known whence these reports had come, or who had spread them; perhaps fear had inspired them. Enough that it was continually repeated that the prince was already sailing down the Sula, that he was already at the Dnieper, that he had set fire to Vasiutynts, that he had slaughtered the inhabitants of Borysa, and the sight of approaching riders or foot-soldiers caused boundless terror. Skshetuski eagerly drank in these reports, for it was clear that even if they were not true, they might yet delay the rebellion in the Dnieper country, over which the hand of the prince pressed hard. Skshetuski wanted to learn something from Naokolo-Palets but it proved that the lieutenant-colonel like all the rest knew nothing definite about the prince and would have liked to have obtained news from Skshetuski; and, as all the baidaks, canoes, and small boats had been drawn up on this side of the river, no fugitives from the other side came to Chigrin.

Skshetuski consequently did not remain long in Chigrin,

but started without delay for Rozloga. The absolute certainty that he would soon be able to convince himself as to what had happened to Helena, and the hope that she had been saved, or had hidden herself with her aunt and the young princes in Lubni, gave him new strength and health. He left the wagon behind, and mounted his horse and urged the Tartars mercilessly onward, who, looking upon him as an ambassador, and themselves as his bodyguard, and obedient to his command, dared offer no resistance. They fairly flew, as if they were being pursued, and left behind them clouds of dust thrown up by the hoofs of their little horses. They passed by farms, hamlets and villages. The land was desolate; the dwellings without inhabitants, so that for a long distance they met not a soul. Probably everyone hid as they approached. Here and there Skshetuski gave orders that they should look for hives of bees in the gardens, and for pigs in the cabins but they could find nothing. It was not until they got to Pohreba that one of the Tartars noticed a human form crouching in the reeds on the banks of the Kahamlik.

The Tartars sprang towards him and in a few moments led forward two perfectly naked men. One of them was an old man, the other a slender boy of sixteen or seventeen years of age; their teeth chattered with fright, and they could not utter a word.

"Where did you come from?" asked Skshetuski.

"We come from nowhere," answered the old man. "We go from door to door with a lyre. This dumb boy leads me."

"Where did you come from last, from what village? Speak out boldly, nothing will happen to you."

"We came through all the villages, sir, until a devil tore our clothes from our body, just here. We had good boots, he took them from us—we had good caps, he took them from us—we had good clothes that had been given us through kind charity, he took them from us, and he did not even leave us our lyre."

"I asked you, idiot, from what village you came."

"I do not know, sir. I am an old man; you see we are naked, at night we freeze, by day we seek compassionate people, begging for food and clothing. We are hungry!"

"Listen, peasant, answer me what I ask you, or I will have you strung up."

"I know nothing, sir. If I know anything, or anything happens, may I . . . "

It was clear that the old beggar could not make out who it was who asked these questions and so had resolved to give no answer.

"Have you been in Rozloga, where the Princes Kurtsevich live?"

"I do not know, sir."

"Strangle him," cried Skshetuski.

"Yes, sir," answered the old man, when he saw that they were not trifling.

"What did you see there?"

"We were there five days ago and then we heard in Brovaka that some knights had gone there."

"What kind of knights?"

"I do not know sir. Some said Poles, the others said Cossacks."

"To horse!" cried Skshetuski, to the Tartars.

They flew over the ground. The sun went down just as it did that evening when the lieutenant, after his first meeting with Helena and the princess, had riden alongside them as they drove in Rozvan's carriage. The Kahamlik gleamed in just such a purple glow, the day was closing more quietly, more warmly, now, but, on that other day, Skshetuski pursued his way with a heart full of happiness and full of the feeling of awakened love. And now, he rushed along, like a lost soul, a prey to unrest and evil forebodings. Presentiments and voices of despair cried in his soul: "Bohun has taken her away by force, thou wilt never see her again;" but the voice of hope cried: "The princess is there, she is saved," and these voices dragged him this way and that, until his heart was nearly broken. The horses galloped along with what was left of strength and energy. Hour by hour passed, the moon appeared above the horizon and rose higher and higher and beamed ever with a paler light. The horses were covered with foam and panted heavily. They had come to the forest. They flew past it like arrows. They had come to the ravine and behind the ravine lay Rozloga. A moment more and the knight's fate would be decided. The wind whistled in his ears from their rapid pace; his cap had fallen from his head; his horse groaned beneath him as if he would soon fall to the ground; another moment, another leap and the ravine was before him. Already, already!

Suddenly a terrific unearthly cry came from Skshetuski's lips.

The house, the barn, the stables, the granaries, the palisades, and the cherry-orchard—all had disappeared.

The pale moon looked down upon an elevation, upon which was a dark heap of ashes which had already ceased to smoke. No sound broke the silence. Skshetuski stood speechless by the moat. He only raised his hands towards Heaven, and looked and looked, and shook his head. The Tartars halted their horses; he got down and looked for the remains of the bridge. He crossed the moat upon a cross-piece and sat upon a stone that lay in the middle of the courtyard. He sat down and began to look around him like a man who visits a place for the first time and tries to find out where he is. He seemed unconscious. He did not utter a sigh. After a few moments he placed his hands on his knees and buried his head between them, and remained in that position so long one might have thought he was asleep. Although he was not asleep he was stunned, and dim pictures instead of thoughts passed through his brain. First he saw Helena, as when he had taken leave of her before his last journey, except that her face seemed to be veiled with mist, so that he could not distinguish her features. He sought to take her out of this mist but could not, and left her therefore with a heavy heart. Then there passed through his mind the market-place at Chigrin; old Zatsvilikhovski, and Zagloba's impudent face. This face stood out with remarkable clearness before his vision until it was finally blotted out by Grodsitski's gloomy countenance. Then he seemed to see Kudak, the Porog, the battle at Khortyts, Sich, the whole journey, and all the occurrences to the last day—to the last hour. From that out, all was darkness. What was now happening, he understood but vaguely; he had only a dim impression that he was travelling to Helena, to Rozloga; that his strength had given out and he was resting upon the ashes. He wished to rise and continue his journey, but an immeasurable weakness chained him to the spot as though a hundred pound cannon-ball were fastened to his feet.

He sat and sat. Night passed. The Tartars prepared to rest, made up the fire and began to roast pieces of horseflesh. When they were satisfied, they lay on the ground.

But an hour had not passed before they sprang up in haste.

In the distance they heard a tramp as of a large body of horsemen riding at full speed. The Tartars hastily fas-

tened a white .rag to a stick and made the fire burn up brightly, so that they might be recognized from a distance as messengers of peace. The tramping of horses, neighing and clashing of swords came nearer and at length a division of horsemen was seen on the road, who immediately surrounded the Tartars.

A short parley followed. The Tartars pointed to the figure who sat among the ruins who could be very easily recognized as the moonlight fell upon him; and explained that he was an ambassador, from whom, they would leave it to himself to say.

The leader of the division accompanied by a few of his companions walked over to the elevation where Skshetuski sat, but hardly had he approached and looked into the face of the man who was sitting there than he stretched out his hands and cried:

"Skshetuski! By the living God, Skshetuski!"

The lieutenant did not tremble.

"Lieutenant, do you not recognize me. I am Bikhovyets. What is the matter with you?" The lieutenant was silent.

"Wake up, for God's sake! Hey, comrades, come here!"

It was indeed Pan Bikhovyets who was riding in the vanguard of Prince Yeremy's entire forces.

Meanwhile other regiments had arrived. The news of the discovery of Skshetuski had been carried with the swiftness of the wind from one regiment to another and all hastened to the spot to greet their favorite comrade. Little Volodiyovski, both the Sleszinskis, Dzik, Orgishevski, Migurski, Yakubovitch, Lents, Pan Longin, Podbipyenta, and a number of other officers made a bet to see which would reach the top of the elevation first; but it was in vain that they questioned him; that they called him by his name; that they shook him by the shoulders; endeavored to make him sit up,—Skshetuski looked at them with large wide-open eyes, but recognized no one. Or, rather, it seemed as if he knew no one, as if everything was indifferent to him. Then those who knew of his love for Helena, and almost all knew, remembered where he was and, as they looked at the black cinders and grey ashes they understood why he was silent.

"He has lost his mind through sorrow," one whispered.

"Despair has driven him crazy."

"Take him to the prince; perhaps he will come to himself when he sees him."

Longin wrung his hands; they all stood round Skshetuski in a circle and looked at him passionately. Some wiped their tears away with their coat sleeves; others sighed sadly.

Presently a stately figure approached, went up slowly to the lieutenant and laid both hands on his head. It was the priest, Mukhovyetski.

All were silent and knelt down as if they expected a miracle but the priest did not perform this miracle. He only continued to hold his hands on Skshetuski's head, lifted his eyes to Heaven, which was illuminated by the bright light of the moon, and began to say aloud:

"*Pater, Noster, qui es in coelis! sanctificatur nomen tuum, adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua!* . . . "

Here he broke off, and after a moment he repeated more loudly and solemnly:

" . . . *Fiat voluntas tua!* . . . "

A profound silence reigned.

" . . . *Fiat voluntas tua!* . . . " Repeated the priest for the third time.

Then from Skshetuski's lips issued a voice of intense pain, but also of resignation.

"*Sicut in coelo, et in terra!*"

And the knight threw himself sobbing to the ground.

THE RUINS OF ROZLOGA.

With Fire and Sword.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

In order to explain more clearly what had happened in Rozloga, we must go back to the night when Skshetuski sent Jendzian from Kudak with letters to the old princess. These letters contained the earnest entreaty that the princess would go to Lubni as soon as possible and place Helena under the care of Prince Yeremy, as war might begin at any moment. Jendzian embarked on the skiff which Grodzitski was sending out from Kudak to bring back gunpowder, and began his journey. They progressed slowly, for they were sailing against the stream. At Kremenchuk they came upon the detachment which was under the command of Kshechovski and Barabash, who had been sent by the hetman to encounter Khmyelnitski. Jendzian spoke with Barabash, and told him at the same time of the dangers which threatened Skshetuski on his journey to Sich. He therefore begged the old colonel when he should encounter Khmyelnitski not to forget to insist upon the return of the ambassador. He then continued his journey.

They reached Chigrin at daybreak. Here they were soon surrounded by the Semenovs watch, who asked who they were; they answered, that they came from Kudak and had letters from Colonel Grodzitski to the hetmans. In spite of this, they called to Jendzian and the others from the boat to give an account of themselves to the colonel.

"To what colonel?" asked the captain of the boat.

"To Colonel Loboda," answered the sergeant of the post, who had received orders from the Chief Hetman to stop and search all persons who came from Sich to Chigrin.

They landed. Jendzian stepped forward boldly, as he feared no harm, for he saw that the power of the hetman reached even as far as here. They were conducted by the Bellringer Vengla to the house of Pan Jalenski, where were the quarters of Colonel Loboda. Here they were told that the colonel had ridden early in the morning to Cherkass and that the lieutenant-colonel represented him. They waited some

time until the door opened, and the expected lieutenant-colonel appeared in the room.

At sight of him, Jendzian's knees trembled.

It was Bohun.

The power of the hetman extended in truth still over Chigrin, but, because Loboda and Bohun had not yet gone over to Khmyelnitski but rather openly attached themselves to the Commonwealth, the Chief Hetman had stationed them in Chigrin and commanded them to be watchful.

Bohun sat down at the table and began to question the new arrivals. The older man who carried with him Grodzitski's letters, spoke for himself and for Jendzian. After the young lieutenant-colonel had looked at the letter he began to inquire particularly what was going on in Kudak. He had evidently a great desire to find out why Grodzitski was sending men and a boat to the Chief Hetman, but the captain could give him no answer and the letters were sealed with Grodzitski's signet. Bohun had finished questioning them and was going to send them away, and was looking in his pocket for somethng to give them when the door opened, and Zagloba burst into the room.

"Listen, Bohun," he cried, "that traitor Dopula has hidden away the best mead. I went with him into the cellar—and what did I see? Nothing but piles of hay in the corner. What is that, I asked dryly. 'Dry,' he said. I looked closer, and what did I see but the neck of the bottle sticking out like a Tartar out of the grass. Ho! Ho! that's what you're up to, sonnie, I said, let us divide the labor; you eat the hay, for you are an ox; and I will drink the mead, for I am a man; and here's the big bottle I brought with me. Give it a fair trial. Give me a cup?"

Then Zagloba placed one hand on his side, with the other he raised the bottle above his head and began to sing:

Hey! Yagush, Hey! Kundush give me the bowl"
And give a kiss also and care for nought else."

Suddenly Zagloba stopped singing—he had caught sight of Jendzian—and placing the bottle on the table he said:

"Hey! By God! That is Pan Skshetuski's boy!"

"Whose?" asked Bohun sharply.

"Skshetuski's! The lieutenant who went to Kudak and before his journey treated me to such excellent mead that he brought from Lubni, that all the rest may hide itself away so

far as I am concerned. What's happening to your master? What's he doing, is he well?"

"Well, and greets you," said Jendzian in confusion.

"Oh, that is a splendid cavalier! And you, how did you get to Chigrin? Why did your master send you away from Kudak?"

"My master had so much business in Lubni, and it was on account of that he commanded me to return. I had nothing to do in Kudak."

All this time Bohun was observing Jendzian keenly. Suddenly he said:

"I know your master also. I saw him in Rozloga."

Jendzian turned his head and listened as though he had not heard distinctly, and asked:

"Where?"

"In Rozloga."

"That belongs to the Kurtseviches," said Zagloba.

"To whom?" asked Jendzian.

"I see you're a little hard of hearing," remarked Bohun dryly.

"Because I have not had enough sleep."

"You can have your sleep out. So you say your master has sent you to Lubni?"

"Yes."

"No doubt he has a sweetheart there," said Zagloba, "to whom he is sending his love through you."

"What do I know, worthy Sir, perhaps so and perhaps not," said Jendzian.

He then bowed to Bohun and Zagloba.

"Praise be!" he said, as he turned to leave the room.

"Forevermore," answered Bohun. "Wait a minute, my boy, do not hurry. Why did you conceal from me that you were Colonel Skshetuski's servant?"

"Because, worthy sir, you did not ask me and I thought to myself, 'Why should I talk unnecessarily. Praise be . . . .'"

"Wait, I say, you have letters from your master?"

"It is my master's business to write them; and mine, as his servant, to deliver them. But only to the one to whom they are addressed; therefore, allow me, sir, to take my leave of you gentlemen."

Bohun knitted his heavy eyebrows and clapped his hands. Immediately two Semenovs sprang into the room.

"Search him," he cried, pointing to Jendzian.

"As I live! Murder!" cried Jendzian. "I am a nobleman, even if I am in service, and you will answer for this act before the tribunal."

"Bohun, let him alone," said Zagloba.

But meanwhile one of the men had already found two letters in Jendzian's breast-pocket and handed them to the lieutenant-colonel. Bohun at once commanded the servants to retire, for he could not read and did not want to acknowledge it before them. Then turning to Zagloba, he said:

"Read this, I will watch the boy."

Zagloba closed his left eye which had a speck on it, and read the address. "To my worthy lady and mistress, Her Excellency the Princes Kurtsevich, in Rozloga."

"So little falcon, you are travelling to Lubni, and do not know where Rozloga is," said Bohun looking at Jendzian with a frightful glance.

"I am travelling where I am ordered to go," answered the boy.

"Shall I open it? A nobleman's seal is sacred," remarked Zagloba.

"The Chief Hetman has given me the right to inspect all letters here. Open and read."

Zagloba opened the letter and read:

"Most Gracious lady, etc., you will be pleased to know that I have already reached Kudak whence, with God's help, I hope to leave safely to-morrow morning for Sich; and I am writing at night, as I cannot sleep for anxiety lest any harm should happen to you, through that villain Bohun or his colleagues. As Colonel Christopher Grodzitski told me yesterday that a great war would soon break out, in which the entire "blacks" would take part, I conjure and entreat you, even if the steppes are not dry and you are obliged to travel on horseback, to set out at once with the young princess for Lubni and not to delay on any account, as I cannot return as soon as I expected. Let me implore Your Grace to grant my request that I may be able to count on my promised bliss and be happy on my return. And why should Your Grace trifle with Bohun and throw dust in his eyes after having promised the girl to me; it would be far better to place her under the protection of my lord the prince who will not delay to send a garrison to Rozloga, by which means your property will be saved."

"Ha! Sir Bohun," said Zagloba, "the knight is trying to

put horns on you. So you've been toasting the same girl! Why did you say nothing about it? But take comfort, the same thing has also happened to me. . . . . "

Zagloba brought his anecdote to an end. The words suddenly died on his lips. Bohun sat immovable at the table, but his face was pale and looked as if drawn by convulsion; his eyes were closed, his forehead wrinkled; he was undergoing a frightful struggle.

"What ails you?" asked Zagloba.

The Cossack beat the air with his hand feverishly, and from his lips came in weak, hoarse tones:

"Read, read the second writing."

The second writing is to Princess Helena.

"Read! Read!"

Zagloba began:

"Sweetest, dearest Halshka, my heart's mistress and queen: As I am obliged to remain here some time longer in the prince's service, I am writing to your aunt to say that you both ought to go to Lubni as soon as possible, where no danger from Bohun can threaten your innocence, and where nothing can stand in the way of our love. . . . . "

"Enough," screamed Bohun; suddenly he jumped like a madman from the table and sprang towards Jendzian. The axe he held in his hand whirled through the air and the unlucky boy whom the axe had hit in the breast groaned and fell to the ground. Bohun was perfectly mad with rage. He sprang towards Zagloba, and snatched the letter from him.

Zagloba seized the bottle of mead, retreated behind the stove, and cried:

"In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! Man are you mad? Are you raving? Be quiet! Calm yourself. Stick your head in a bucket of water. A thousand devils!—do you hear me?"

"Blood! Blood!" howled Bohun.

"Have you lost your reason? Stick your head in a bucket of water, I say. You have already got blood; you have spilled it, spilled innocent blood, this unlucky boy breathes no longer. The devil has taken possesson of you—or you are the devil himself; come to yourself, if not, then go to the devil, you son of a Pagan!"

Then Zagloba glided from the other side of the table toward Jendzian; bent over him, felt his breast and laid his hand on his mouth from which the blood was flowing freely.

Bohun meanwhile had clutched his head with both hands, whining like a wounded wolf; then he fell on the bench and continued to whimper unceasingly, for his heart was breaking with rage and pain. Suddenly he sprang up, hastened to the door, kicked it open and sprang into the hall.

"Go and break your neck," murmured Zagloba to himself. "Go and dash your head against the stable, or against the barn, if you can butt like the cattle with your head. I call that raging madness! I have never seen anything like it in my life. His teeth snapped like a rabid dog. But the poor boy yet lives. Truly if this mead does not help him, he must have told a lie when he said he belonged to the nobility."

Zagloba rested Jendzian's head against his knee and slowly poured a few drops of mead between his blue lips. "We will see if you have noble blood in you," he continued to the fainting boy, "for Jewish blood boils when you pour in mead or wine; peasants' blood is lazy and heavy and sinks to the ground. Only noble blood becomes animated and forms an excellent liquid which gives the body courage and energy. The Lord gave each nation a different drink, in order that each one might have its comfort. . . . . "

Jendzian groaned feebly.

"Aha! Aha! he wants some more! No, little brother, let me have one draught. . . . Ah! thats good. And now, as you have shown some signs of life, I will take you out into the stable and lay you in a corner, that this Cossack dragon may not tear you to pieces when he returns. He is a dangerous friend,—devil take him! I see that his hand is more ready than his understanding."

Zagloba lifted Jendzan from the ground with an ease which his enormous strength made easy and carried him into the halls and through the yard where several Semenovs were throwing dice on a cloth spread on the ground. When they saw him, they saluted him, but he said:

"Boys, take this fellow and lay him on the hay and one of you run and get me the barber-surgeon."

The command was at once carried out, for as Bohun's friend, Zagloba was treated with great respect by the Cossacks.

"And where is the colonel?" he asked.

"He called for his horse and rode into the camp. He told us to hold ourselves in readiness and to saddle the horses."

"Is mine ready then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring it here! So I shall find the colonel with the regiment?"

"There he comes!"

In the dark arched doorway of the house, Bohun appeared. He came riding over from the market-place; behind him in the distance were seen the lances of a hundred or more Cossacks, who were evidently ready to march.

"To horse!" cried Bohun across the yard, to the men who had remained behind. Presently all were moving. Zagloba stepped out of the gate and scanned the young Cossack leader carefully with his eyes.

"You're going to set out?" he asked.

"I am."

"And whither is the devil leading you?"

"To a wedding."

Zagloba drew closer to him.

"Fear God, my son! The hetman commanded you to guard the town, and you are going away yourself and also taking the Semenovs with you! You are breaking his command. The black mob are only waiting for a suitable opportunity to attack the nobility; you are abandoning the town to destruction and exposing yourself to the hetman's anger."

"May they both go to destruction, the town and the hetman!"

"Your head is at stake."

"May my head also go to destruction."

Zagloba saw that talking to him would do no good. He had set his mind upon this and whether he destroyed himself, as well as others, he would abide by his resolve. Zagloba also surmised whither he was going, but did not himself know what to do; whether he should ride with Bohun or remain here. It would be dangerous to accompany him. It meant adventures and risk of life in these warlike and rough times; but if he remained here? The people were, in fact, only waiting for news from Sich, for the moment when the signal shall be given for slaughter. Indeed, they might not even have awaited that signal if Bohun's thousand men and his powerful influence had not been in the Ukraine. Zagloba might, indeed, seek shelter in the camp of the hetmans, but whether it was on account of some murder or some error in his accounts he himself only knew; certain it was that he did not wish to be seen. He was sorry to leave Chigrin for he felt at his ease here. One asked him no questions. He was on

good terms with the nobility, with the landed proprietors, and with the Cossack chiefs; these latter were now indeed distributed in all directions, and the nobility sat quietly in their corners from dread of the storm. But Bohun was a most excellent companon, a drinker among drinkers. Zagloba and Bohun had made each other's acquaintance over their cups and had at once struck up a friendship. From that time one never saw one without the other. The Cossack threw away enough gold pieces for two; the nobleman told lies, and both these restless spirits were very happy in each other's company.

Now, that he had to decide whether he would remain in Chigrin and give himself up to the knives of the "blacks," or set out with Bohun; he decided on the latter course.

"If you are so determined," he said, "I will go with you. Perhaps I may be of some assistance to you or may be able to restrain you if necessary. We suit each other as well as the hook fits the eye, but I did not expect this."

Bohun answered nothing.

Half an hour later, two hundred Semenovs stood in marching order. Bohun rode to their head and, beside him, Zagloba. They moved forward. The peasants standing in groups, here and there, in the market-place, looked at them with fear and whispered to one another. They asked one another whither they were going and if they would soon return or not.

Bohun rode silent, reticent, full of mystery, and gloomy as night. The Semenovs did not ask whither he was leading them. They were ready to follow him to the end of the world.

After they had crossed the Dnieper, they came to the highway of Lubni. The horses trotted along and threw up clouds of dust, although, as the day was dry and close, they were soon covered with foam. They slackened their pace and moved like a straggling band along the highway. Presently, Zagloba endeavored to begin a conversation with Bohun.

The face of the young knight was more calm, but a mortal sorrow was depicted in his features. It seemed as though the distance in which his glance lost itself towards the north, beyond the Kamhalik, the tramp of the horses and the air of the steppes had quieted the inward storm that had been aroused in him by Jandzian's letters.

"Fire is falling from heaven," said Zagloba. "The straw in my boots is burning, and my linen smock is too warm, for there is not a breath of air. Listen, Bohun, Bohun!"

The Cossack leader looked at him with his deep-set, black eyes as though he had just awakened from sleep.

"Look out for yourself, little son," said Zagloba, "lest melancholy devour you, for when it rises from the liver, which is its proper place, to the head, it is capable of disturbing one's reason. I did not know that you were such an amorous gentleman. You must have been born in May and that is the month of Venus, in which the air is so full of love that one splinter is in love with another. Men who are born in this month have in their bones a stronger desire for the opposite sex than other men; but those win, who know how to control themselves; therefore I advise you to give in. You may be right in your rage against the Kurtseviches, but is there only one girl in the world?"

Bohun, not as if he were speaking to Zagloba, but as if in answer to his own sorrow, said in a voice that was more like crying than talking:

"Only this one zazula (cuckoo), only this one in the world!"

"But if that were so, and she now loves another, what good will it do you? It is well said that the heart is a volunteer that serves under what flag it chooses. Consider, also, the girl is of great blood, for the Kurtseviches belong, as I hear, to a princely stock. That's a high threshold to step over!"

"To the devil with your thresholds, your parchments, your families, and—" here the chief struck his sword-hilt with all his might—"this is my high birth and my parchment; this is my kin and my parchment! Oh, ye traitors! Cursed blood of the enemy! Was not the Cossack good enough for you, was he not your friend and brother when he went into the Crimea, when you said 'bring back some Turkish spoils. Divide the booty.' Ah! they did that, sure enough; called me little son, promised the girl! and now—a nobleman comes along, a petted Polish boy, and on the spot they send away the Cossack, the friend, the brother—they have torn my heart in my body; they have martyred my soul; they give the girl to another and thou, bite the dust, Cossack, and bear it. . . . . "

His voice trembled; he clenched his teeth, beat his breast with his closed fists so that an echo was heard. Then followed a silence. Bohun breathed heavily, pain and anger raged alternately in the savage breast of the Cossack, who knew no restraint. Zagloba waited until he should become exhausted and calm himself.

"What do you think of doing, unhappy bully? How will you act?"

"Like a Cossack. In the manner of the Cossack."

"Hm! I see well what will happen, but let it happen! One thing only I will tell you that we are in Vishnyovyetski's dominions, and Lubni is not far from here. Skshetuski has written to the princess to seek shelter there, that means, that they are under the protection of the prince and the prince is a terrible lion." . . . .

"The Khan is also a lion, and yet I ran into his jaws and lighted up his eyes with torches."

"What, madman? Do you wish to declare war against the prince?"

"Khmyel has dared to declare war against the hetmans, why not against your prince?"

Zagloba became every moment more uneasy.

"Fie! To the devil with you! That is rebellion pure and simple. *'Vis armata,' 'rapta puellae,' 'et rebellia'*—that is to say, hangmen, gallows, and the noose. A fine coach and six! You may get high with it, if not far. The Kurtseviches will defend themselves."

"Well! my death or theirs. Look here, I would have given my soul for these Kurtseviches. They were as my brothers and the old princess was a mother to me, into whose eyes I looked with the fidelity of a dog! And, when the Tartars captured Vasil, who went into the Crimea, who set him free? —I. I have loved them and served them as a slave, because I hoped to win this girl; and, as a reward, they have betrayed me; betrayed me like a slave, into sorrow and misery. . . . . They have driven me away—well, I will go; but, first, I will take my love; for the bread and salt that I have eaten at their table I will repay them in Cossack fashion—and then I will go, for I know my road."

"Where will you go when you begin to fight the prince? Into Khmyel's camp?"

"If they had given me this girl, I would have been your brother, your friend, your sword, your sworn soul; your dog; and I would have taken my men, would have recalled the others from the Ukraine, and then I would have marched against Khmyel and against my own brothers, the Zaporojians. And would I demand a reward for this?—No! I would take the girl and would move to the other side of the Dnieper, into God's free steppes; into the wild caves and near the still waters—and I would have been satisfied—and now—"

"And now you are raving mad."

The chieftan did not answer, but gave his horse a crack with the whip and rode forward. Zagloba began to reflect into what a position he had got himself. There was no doubt that Bohun intended to attack the Kurtseviches to avenge the injustice done him, and carry off the girl by force, and, in this undertaking, Zagloba would have rendered him assistance. Such happenings were not uncommon in the Ukraine and frequently passed unpunished. It is true, as the aggressor was not a nobleman, the matter became more involved and more dangerous; but on the other hand it was very hard to carry out a sentence on a Cossack, for where could one look for him or capture him? After the deed he usually fled into the wildest steppes, where no human hand could reach him—and disappeared; and, if a war broke out, if the Tartars covered the land, then the criminal came to light; for then the laws were suspended. In this way Bohun could escape justice, and Zagloba did not need to help him and take half the blame on his own shoulders. He would not have done it, in any case; for even if Bohun was his friend it would not become Zagloba, as a nobleman, to make common cause with a Cossack against another nobleman, especially as he knew Skshetuski and had drunk with him.

Zagloba was a quarrelsome fellow but his turbulence knew certain bounds. He was glad to lounge about in the wine-shops of Chigrin with Bohun and the other Cossack commanders, especially when they paid the way—that suited him very well; in view of the Cossack trouble, it was even a good thing to have such men as friends. Zagloba took great care of his own skin though he might get a scratch here and there—but now he began to see that this friendship had led him on slippery ice. It was clear that, if Bohun kidnapped the girl who was the betrothed of the lieutenant, the favorite of the prince, he would have to settle with the prince; and then there would be nothing left for him to do but to go over to Khmyelnitski and join the rebellion. Against this course, Zagloba placed a decided veto as far as his own person was concerned. For he did not fancy joining the rebellion on account of Bohun's love affair and, besides, he feared the prince as he feared fire.

"Tut, tut!" he mumbled to himself, "I have twisted the devil's tail and now he will twist my neck. The devil take this Cossack, with the face of a woman and the hands of a

Tartar! I've gone to a fine wedding, truly! May the lightning strike the Kurtseviches, and all the women! What do I care about them? I do not need them any more! Whatever happens I shall get the worst of it. And for what? Do I wish to get married? The Devil may get married, it is all the same to me. What have I to do with this undertaking? If I go with Bohun, Vishnyovyetski will flay me alive; if I leave Bohun, the peasants will kill me, or he will do it himself, without hesitating. It is the worst thing in the world to be on friendly terms with a boor. It serves me right. I would rather be the horse on which I am mounted than Zagloba. I have become the fool of the Cossack. I have attached myself to this crazy head. It serves me right that I should be flayed on both sides."

These reflections caused Zagloba to perspire freely and made him still more gloomy. The heat was intense; the horse travelled with difficulty, for he had not exercised for some time and Zagloba was corpulent. Good Heavens! what would he have given to be sitting now in the cool shade, in the inn, with a glass of cold beer before him, instead of being tormented by the heat and obliged to tear through the burning steppes.

Although Bohun urged speed, the pace grew slower, for the heat was frightful. The horses were fed lightly and, during that time, Bohun conversed with the sergeants. He gave them commands as to what they were to do, for until now, they did not even know where they were riding to. The last words of the command reached Zagloba's ear.

"Wait for the shot."

"Good! little father!"

Bohun turned to him sudednly.

"You will ride ahead with me."

"I," said Zagloba in very evident bad humor. "I love you so much that I've already sweated half my soul out of my body. Why should I not give you the other half? We are like vest and lining. I hope that the devil will take us both together and I do not care how soon, for I think that it cannot be any hotter in hell than it is here."

"Forward!"

"At breakneck speed."

They rode forward, the Cossacks following them, but as these rode more slowly, they soon were a considerable distance in the rear, and finally were lost to sight.

Bohun and Zagloba rode in silence, side by side, both sunk in deep thought. Zagloba tugged at his moustache and, evidently, was doing some deep thinking. Perhaps he was considering in what manner he could get himself out of the whole affair. From time to time, he muttered to himself, then he looked at Bohun, in whose features unbridled rage and melancholy were alternately depicted.

"Remarkable!" said Zagloba to himself, "such a handsome fellow, and yet not able to win the girl. He is a Cossack—that is true; but a distinguished knight and lieutenant-colonel who, sooner or later if he does not join the rebellion, will be ennobled. It all depends on himself. Skshetuski is a fine, well-built cavalry officer but canot compare in beauty with this graceful Cossack. Eh! they will tear each other's eyes out when they meet, for they are both of them good fighters."

"Bohun, do you know Skshetuski well?" asked Zagloba.

"No," answered the Cossack leader curtly.

"You will have a hard fight with him. I saw him when he pushed the door open with Chaplinski. He is a Goliath with the goble. as well as the sword."

The leader did not answer. They both relapsed into their own thoughts and cares. Zagloba repeated from time to time "So, so! there is nothing to be done!"

Several hours passed; the sun had passed over towards the direction of Chigrin. From the East, there blew a cool breeze. Zagloba took off his cap of lynx skin, passed his hand over his perspiring head and again repeated:

"So, so! there is nothing to be done."

Bohun started as if he had been suddenly awakened from sleep.

"What did you say?' 'he asked.

"I said it would soon be dark. Have we far to go yet?"

"Not far."

In an hour it became dark, but they rode into the ravine of the wood and, as they reached the end, on the other side, they saw the glimmer of a light.

"That is Rozloga," said Bohun suddenly.

"Indeed. brrr! it is cold in this ravine."

Bohun reined in his horse.

"Wait," he said.

Zagloba looked at him. The chief's eyes, which had the peculiarity of shining in the darkness, glowed now like two torches.

They both stood motionless, on the edge of the ravine; presently was heard the snorting of approaching horses. Bohun's men were slowly coming from the depths of the wood. The sergeant approached, in order to receive his commands which Bohun whispered into his ear. Then the Cossacks halted.

"Let us ride on," said Bohun to Zagloba.

Before long, the dark outlines of the dwelling-house, the storehouses, and the wells, stood before their eyes. All was still in the house. The dogs did not bark, the great, yellow moon stood above the courtyard. From the garden came the fragrance of cherry, and apple-blossoms; all was so peaceful; the night so glorious, that all that seemed wanting was a theorlo beneath the windows of the beautiful young princess. There was light in some of the windows.

The two horsemen approached the gate.

"Who's there?" cried the voice of the night-watch.

"Do you not recognize me, Maxim?"

"Is it your Grace? Praised be God."

"For ever and ever. Open. How are you all?"

"All well. It is a long time since Your Grace was in Rozloga."

The door-hinges creaked terribly, the bridge was let down, and both knights rode into the courtyard.

"Listen, Maxim, do not close the gate, and do not draw up the bridge, for I shall soon go away."

"You come as if you only wanted fire."

"That's it; that's it. Tie the horses to the post."

CHAPTER II.

The Kurtseviches were not yet asleep; they sat at the supper table in the hall that was hung with weapons, which stretched the whole breadth of the house, from the court-yard to the other side of the garden. As they saw Bohun and Zagloba, they sprang from their places in affright. In the features of the princess, one might read not only astonishment, but annoyance and fear at the same time. Only two of the young princes were present, Simeon and Nicholas.

"Bohun," said the princess, "what are you doing here?"

"I came in order to bring you my greeting, mother? What, am I not welcome?"

"Very welcome, I was only astonished that you had left your guard in Chigrin. And whom has the dear God sent with you?"

"This is Pan Zagloba, a nobleman, my friend."

"Be welcome," said the princess.

"Welcome," repeated Simeon and Nicholas.

"Gracious Lady," said Zagloba, "'a guest at the wrong time is worse than a Tartar,' says the old proverb; but they also say, 'whoever will get to Heaven must receive the wandered into his house; must feed the hungry; must give drink to those who thirst' . . . "

"Well, sit down and eat and drink," said the old princess. "We thank you for having come. Well now, Bohun, I had not expected you. You must have something important to talk to us about."

"It may well be," said the chief slowly.

"And what may it be?" said the princess uneasily.

"We will talk about that at a convenient moment. Let me rest. I have come at ful speed direct from Chigrin."

"You evidently were in a great hurry to see us."

"And whom should I be in a hurry to see if not all of you? And is the young princess well?"

"She is well," said the princess dryly.

"I should like to see the joy of my eyes."

"Helena is asleep."

"That is a pity, for I shall not remain here long."

"And where are you riding to?"

"It is war mother! Time presses. At any moment, the Hetmans may take the field; and it would grieve me to fight the Zaporojians. How often we rode with them to get Turkish booty—did we not, princess? How often did we go on the sea; how often did we eat bread and salt together; drink and joke together; and now we are their enemies."

The princess loked sharply at Bohun. The thought darted through her mind that Bohun, perhaps, intended to join the rebellion, and had come to Rozloga to sound her sons.

"And what do you think of doing," she asked.

"I, mother? Well, it is very hard to fight against one's own, but it must be."

"We will do the same," said Simeon.

"Khmyelnitski is a traitor," added the younger brother, Nicholas.

"Death to traitors!" said Bohun.

"The devil take them!" added Zagloba.

Bohun again spoke.

"So it is in the world! He who is your friend to-day, will be a Judas to you to-morrow. You can trust no one in the world."

"Only good people," said the princess.

"Certainly, only good people one can trust; that is why I trust and love you, for you are good people, and no traitors . . . "

There was such a strange tone in the chieftain's voice that for a moment there was deep silence. Zagloba looked at the princess and blinked with his sound eye. The princess, however, fixed her eyes on Bohun, who continued:

"War does not give life, but death; that is why I wanted to see you once more, before I moved. Who knows if I shall return? And you will mourn for me, for you are my true friends, are you not?"

"As true as God lives. We have known you since you were a child."

"You are our brother," added Simeon.

"You are princes, noblemen, and you did not despise the Cossack. You received him into your house; promised him your relative, because you knew that, without her there was no life, no existence for the Cossack. So you received the Cossack with kindness."

"Why do you talk about that?" said the princess hastily.

"No, mother we must talk about it, for you are my benefactors; and I have prayed this nobleman, my friend, to adopt me as his son and give me his coat-of-arms that I may be no disgrace to you to give your relative to a Cossack. Pan Zagloba has promised me and we will both demand permission to do so in the Diet; and, after the war, I will ask the Chief Hetman to forward my cause. He is favorably disposed toward me, and has arranged that Kshechovski shall be ennobled."

"God be with you," said the princess.

"You are honorable people, and I thank you, but, before the war, I should like to hear once again from your mouth that you will keep your word. The word of a nobleman is no smoke—and you are noblemen, you are princes."

The chieftain spoke in slow, impressive tones, but, through his speech, there sounded a threat, which warned all to grant what he demanded:

The old princess glanced at her sons and they looked at their mother. A short silence ensued. Suddenly the falcon, who was perched under a coat-of-arms on the wall, began to scream although it was a long time before it would be daylight. The other birds also began to cry. The great hawk awoke, shook his wings and began to scream.

The wooden logs in the fireplace were smouldering. The room became dark and gloomy.

"Nicholas, rake up the fire," said the princess. The young prince threw fresh wood into the fire-place.

"Well, you promised me," said Bohun.

"We must ask Helena."

"She will speak for herself, you for yourselves. Do you promise me?"

"We do promise it," said the princess.

"We promise it," repeated the young princes.

Bohun started to his feet, turned to Zagloba and said in a loud voice:

"Pan Zagloba, do you also ask for the girl; perhaps they will promise her to you."

"What is the matter with you, Cossack? Are you drunk?" cried the princess.

Instead of answering, Bohun drew Skshetuski's letter from his pocket, turned to Zagloba, and said:

"Read!"

Zagloba took the letter and began to read. A gloomy silence reigned.

As he finished, Bohun crosed his hands on his ibreast.

"To whom will you then give the girl?" he asked.

"Bohun!"

The voice of the Cossack leader sounded now like the hissing of a serpent.

"Traitors! knaves, dog-faith followers! Judases! . . . "

"Eh! little sons, draw your swords," cried the princess.

The Kurtseviches sprang like lightning towards the wall, and seized some weapons.

"Quietly, gentlemen," cried Zagloba.

But, he had not finished speaking, when Bohun drew a pistol from his belt and fired.

"Jesus!" groaned Prince Simeon, taking a step forward, and then, throwing up his arms, he fell heavily to the ground.

"Help, servants!" cried the princess despairingly.

But, at this moment, there came from the courtyard other shots. Doors and windows were forced open and the Semenovs sprang into the hall.

"Kill them!" thundered wild voices.

The alarm bell sounded in the courtyard; the birds in the hall began to scream; the noise of firing and wild cries filled the peaceful house, already half sunk in sleep.

The old princess, howling like a she-wolf, threw herself on Simeon's body, which quivered in the last death-throes; but presently, two Semenovs seized her and dragged her by the hair to the side of the room, while the young Nicholas, forced into a corner of the hall, was defending himself with the courage of a lion.

"Back! back!" cried Bohun, suddenly, to the Cossacks who surrounded them. "Back!" he repeated with a voice of thunder.

The Cossacks drew back. They thought their leader wanted to save the boy's life, but Bohun himself, with his sword in his hand, threw himself on the young prince. Then began a frightful duel, which the princess, held back by the hair by four iron hands, watched with burning eyes and open mouth. The young prince threw himself like a hurricane upon the Cossack, who drew back slowly and enticed him into the middle of the hall. Suddenly, he crouched, parried his opponent's thrust, and, from defending himself began to attack.

The Cossacks held their breath, lowered their swords and stood as if rooted to the spot, following the struggle with their eyes.

In the silence, one heard only the breathing and panting of the combatants, the grinding of their teeth, and the swish or the sharp clash of their swords.

For a moment it seemed as if the obstinacy and immense strength of the lad would conquer the Cossack leader, for he began again to withdraw and to defend himself. His face appeared to contract from the exertion. Nicholas redoubled his blows; dust flew from the floor and surrounded the fighters with a thick cloud. But, in the midst of it, the soldiers saw how the blood was streaming from the face of their leader. Suddenly, Bohun sprang aside; the prince's sword struck the empty air; Nicholas wavered with the force of the stroke and bent forward and, at that moment, the Cossack gave him such a dreadful blow in the neck that the prince fell as if struck by lightning. The cries of joy of the Cossacks mingled with the unearthly screams of the princess. It seemed as if the ceiling would break from the noise. The struggle was over; the Cossacks threw themselves upon the weapons that hung on the walls and began to tear them down, or to snatch the costly arms from each other's hands, stepping over the body of the prince and of their own comrades, who had been killed by the hand of Nicholas. Bohun let them do as they pleased. He stood, breathing heavily from exhaustion, in the doorway which led to Helena's room, and blocked the entrance. His face was pale and bloody, for the prince had twice cut his head. His wandering glance went from the body of Nicholas to that of Simeon and fell occasionally on the pallid face of the princess, whom the Cossacks were holding by the hair and pressing down on the floor with their knees, as she sought to escape from their hands and throw herself on the corpses of her children.

The noise and confusion in the hall increased every moment. The Cossacks bound the servants of the Kurtseviches with ropes and killed them ruthlesssly. The floor was bathed with blood and covered with corpses. The rooms were filled with smoke; the walls were plundered; even the birds were killed.

Suddenly, the door in which Bohun was standing was slightly opened. The Cossack leader turned round and suddenly stepped backward.

In the doorway appeared blind Vasil and with him, Helena, in a white nightrobe, herself as white as the robe, with terrified face and open mouth.

Vasil held up a cross in both hands. Amid the confusion that reigned in the hall, in the presence of the corpses, of their blood that lay in pools on the floor, amid the glitter of drawn swords and fiery glances, this tall, emaciated form, with the gray hair and the dark hollows instead of eyes, looked wonderfully impressive, as though he were a spirit, a departed one arisen again; as though he had laid off his grave-clothes and returned to chastise crime.

The shouts ceased; the Cossacks drew back in terror; in the silence sounded the calm, but mournful lamenting voice of the prince.

"In the name of the Father, of the Redeemer, and the Holy Immaculate! You men who come here from distant lands, do ye come in the name of God?"

"For blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And do you bring good news, are you apostles?"

Dead silence followed Vasil's words. He, however, turned slowly with his cross, first to one side and then the other and continued:

"Woe unto you who carry on war for gain or vengeance, ye shall be damned forever. . . . Let us pray that we may obtain mercy. Woe unto you, brothers! Woe unto me! Oh! Oh! Oh!" A heavy sigh escaped his breast

"God be merciful to us," said the Cossacks in muffled tones. They were under the influence of an indescribable terror, and began to cross themselves in fear.

Suddenly, a wild scream came from the princess.

"Vasil! Vasil!"

There was something so heartbreaking in her voice that it might have been the last cry of a dying one. The Cossacks who were holding her down with their knees, felt now that she would no longer have the strength to escape them. The prince shuddered and sheltered himself with the cross on the side from which the voice came and answered:

"Accursed soul, that callest from the depths! Woe unto thee!"

"God be merciful to us," repeated the Cossacks.

"Come to me, my men," cried Bohun at this moment, as he tottered and would have fallen.

The Cossacks sprang towards him and supported him.

"Are you wounded, little father?"

"Yes, but it is nothing; loss of blood. Here, my men, guard this girl as the apple of your eye. Surround the house; let no one go out. . . . Princess. . . . "

He could say no more; his lips became white and his eyes were clouded.

"Carry the ataman into a room," cried Zagloba, who now came creeping out of some corner, and unexpectedly rose up close to Bohun.

"It is nothing; it is nothing," said he, after he had felt the wounds with his fingers. "To-morrow he will be well again; I will devote myself to him. Knead up some bread with cobwebs; go to the devil, you fellows! Go, and have some fun with the girls, for you are no use here. Two of you carry the ataman; take him up carefully; that's it. Now, move, away to the devil. What are you standing here for? To watch the house? I will see to that."

Two Semenovs took Bohun up and carried him into the adjoining room. The others left the hall. Zagloba stepped up to Helena, blinked at her with his eye, and said quickly and softly:

"I am a friend of Pan Skshetuski. Fear nothing! Only take your prophet away, put him to sleep, and wait for me." Then he went into the room in which two Cossacks had laid Bohun upon a Turkish divan; he sent them for bread and cobwebs and, when they had brought them from the servant's hall, he attended the young ataman with the greatest skill, which at that time every nobleman possessed, and which he acquired in sewing up heads after duels or after diets.

"And say to the soldiers," he continued to the sergeants, "that the ataman will be as well as a fish to-morrow, and they need not be worried about him. Yes, he had hard knocks, but he has shown what he can do and to-morrow will be his wedding, even if we have no priest. If there is a cellar in the house, you may make yourselves merry. Now the wounds are already bound up. Go away so that the ataman may get some rest.

The sergeants went out of the room.

"And do not drink the cellar quite dry," said Zagloba.

Then he sat at the head of the Cassock chief and looked him closely in the face.

"Well, the devil will not carry you away on account of these wounds although you had some pretty hard knocks. You will not be able to move hand or foot for two days," he

mumbled to himself as he looked at the pale face and closed eyes of the Cossack. The sword did not wish to rob the hangman, for you are allotted to him and you will not escape him. When you are hanged, the devil will make a doll out of you for his children, for you are handsome. No, little brother, you are a good drinker, but you will not drink with me any more. Look for your company among the crab-fishers, for I see you like to kill; but it is not to my fancy to attack the houses of the nobility at night with you as my companion. Let the hangman light you home! Let him light you!"

Bohun faintly sighed.

"Oh sigh, groan away; to-morrow you will groan louder! Wait awhile, Tartar soul, you would like to have the princess? Bah! I am not astonished. The girl is a marvel, but if you taste her the dogs shall eat my wit. Hair shall grow in the palm of my hand first . . . "

A confusion of voices from the courtyard came to Zagloba's ear.

"Aha! they've already found their way to the cellar," he grunted. "Oh! drink away, until you are soaked through like sponges; then you will sleep well. I will keep watch instead of you, although I do not know if you will be pleased on that account to-morow."

He got up, in order to see that the Cossacks had really made acquaintance with the princess's cellar, and went out into the hall. It was a frightful sight. In the middle of the hall, lay the already stiffened corpses of Simeon and Nicholas and, in the corner, the body of the princess in a sitting and crouching posture into which the knees of the Cossacks had forced her. Her eyes were open; her teeth gleamed; the fire which burned on the hearth filled the whole hall with a flickering light which glistened in the pools of blood. All was dark. Zagloba approached the princess in order to see if she was still breathing. He laid his hands on her face but it was already cold. He went hastily towards the courtyard, for fear drove him from the house. In the courtyard, the Cossacks had already begun their revelry; the fire was burning and by its light Zagloba perceived barrels of mead and wine and gorzalka, the tops of which had been knocked off. The Cossacks dipped into the barrels as if they were wells, and drank unceasingly. Some, to whose head the gorzalka had already mounted, were chasing the

servant girls who ran hither and thither in fear, or dashed blindly through the fire; others, amid wild noise and laughter, let themselves be dragged back to the barrels and bon fires where they were dancing the "Cossack." The Cossacks sprang back and forth in the air as if they were possessed. The girls courtesied to them; then they tripped forward, bending over towards them; sometimes, the girls stepped back on seeing the wild movements of the dancers. The lookers-on were beating tin cups or singing. The shouts of "Uha" sounded louder and louder, accompanied by the barking of dogs, the neighing of horses, or the bellowing of cattle which were being slaughtered for the evening meal. Around the fire, in the background, were seen peasants from Rozloga. They had all come running from the village on hearing the reports of firearms and the screams, in order to see what was going on. They did not think of defending the princess, for the Kurtseviches were hated in the village. They only looked on at the wild revelry of the Cossacks, nudged each other with their elbows, whispered to one another, and dipped more frequently into the barrels of vodka and mead. The orgy grew ever more fierce, the drunkenness increased, the Cossacks no longer dipped into the barrels with their tin cups but stuck their heads in, as far as their necks, and covered the dancing girls with vodka and mead. Their faces glowed; the heads fairly steamed with heat; most of them could hardly keep their feet. Zagloba, who had gone out upon the porch, let his glance rest upon the drunken men; then he looked attentively up at the sky.

"The night is fine but dark," he murmured. "When the moon goes down they will be so that you may hit them on the snout."

With these words he went slowly towards the barrels and the drunken Cossacks.

"Keep it up boys! keep it up!" he said, "don't stint yourselves. Haida! Haida! Your teeth will not become blunt. He is a fool who does not drink to-day to the health of the ataman. Go for the barrels! Go for the girls! Uha!"

"Uha!" howled the Cossacks joyously.

Zagloba looked around him on all sides.

"Oh you jades, such rogues and vagabonds!" he cried suddenly, "to drink yourselves like weary horses and to give nothing to the watch guarding the house. Nothing? Here, relieve the watch!"

The command was immediately obeyed and several drunken Cossacks started off to replace the watch who had hitherto taken no share in the festivities. The guards came running up with a haste that can readily be understood.

"Haida! haida!" cried Zagloba, pointing to the barrels of liquor.

"We thank you, sir," they answered, dipping their cups in the barrels.

In another hour let the present watch be relieved."

"Yes, sir," answered the Esaul.

It seemed perfectly natural to the Semenovs that Zagloba should take the command in Bohun's place; it had happened before, and the Cossacks did not mind it, for the noble allowed them everything they wanted.

The watch drank with the rest—Zagloba began a conversation with the peasants from Rozloga.

"Peasant," he asked an old settler, "is it far from here to Lubni?"

"Oh, very far, sir!" answered the peasant.

"Could one get there by morning?"

"Oh! no sir!"

"By noon?"

"By noon, sir."

"And what road do you take?"

"Just take the highway."

"Is that the highway?"

"Prince Yeremy commanded that this should be the road, and so it is."

Zagloba spoke intentionally very loud, so that the Semenovs could hear him, amid the noise and the shouts.

"Give them some gorzalka too," he said to the Cossacks pointing to the peasants, "but give me some mead first for it is cold."

One of the men dipped out some mead from the barrel in a tin pail and, setting it upon his cap, handed it to Zagloba.

The nobleman took it carefully in both hands so that he might not spill any; put the pail to his lips, bent his head backward and drank slowly, without drawing breath.

He drank and drank—till the Cossacks were astonished. "Dost thou see?" they said to one another, "the thunder strike him!"

Meanwhile Zagloba's head bent slowly backwards, and

when he took the pail away from his red face, he pursed his lips, raised his eyebrows and said, as if to himself:

"Oh! not bad, excellent! One can see that it is good! It is a pity to waste such stuff on your miserable throats, dregs would be good enough for you. A strong mead; very strong. It has done me good; I feel warmer."

The mead had really done Zagloba good; his head became clearer; and it was evident that his blood, mixed with mead, made that excellent liquid which, as he was accustomed to say, permeated the whole body with courage and determination.

He gave a sign with his hand to the Cossacks that they might go on drinking, turned around and went with leisurely steps through the whole yard; looked carefully into all corners, crossed the moat and turned round by the stockade in order to see if the sentries were watching the house properly.

The first sentry was asleep; also the second, third, and fourth; they were weary from their journey, and were drunk when they had taken their posts, and consequently had fallen asleep.

"I might steal anyone here to have a servant in my service," murmured Zagloba.

He turned by the shortest way into the house, passed through the ill-omened hall, looked at Bohun, and, as, he saw that he gave no sign of life, drew back to Helena's door, opened it gently, and stepped into the room, from which came a murmur, as of prayer.

"It was really Prince Vasil's room, but Helena was with the prince, feeling safer in his presence. The blind Vasil knelt before the picture of the Holy Virgin, before which burned a small lamp; Helena knelt beside him; and both prayed aloud. As she perceived Zagloba, she turned her terrified eyes towards him. Zagloba placed his fingers on his lips.

"Gracious princess," he said, "I am a friend of Lieutenant Skshetuski."

"Save me!" answered Helena.

"That is why I have come here. You may trust me."

"What shall I do?"

"Fly, before that devil returns to consciousness!"

"What shall I do?"

"Put on man's clothing, and when I knock at the door come out."

Helena wavered; distrust was evident in her countenance.

"Dare I trust you?"

"And whom could you trust better?"

"True, very true, but swear to me that you will not betray me!"

"Young lady you have lost your reason, but if you wish it I will swear. So help me God and the Holy Cross, here is ruin; salvation lies in flight."

"Yes, that is true."

"Put on male attire as quickly as possible, and wait."

"And Vasil?"

"What Vasil?"

"My imbecile brother," said Helena.

"Ruin threatens you, not him," answered Zagloba. "If he is out of his mind he is sacred to the Cossacks. I noticed how they took him for a prophet."

"Yes, that is true; he has done nothing to injure Bohun."

"We must leave him here; otherwise we shall perish—and Pan Skshetuski with us. Make haste, young lady."

Zagloba then left the room and went to Bohun.

The Cossack leader was pale and weak, but his eyes were open:

"Do you feel better?" said Zagloba.

Bohun wished to speak but could not.

"Can you not speak?"

Bohun moved his head to show that he could not, but at the same time anguish was visible in his features; his wounds evidently pained him from the movement.

"Can you not cry out?"

Bohun showed by his eyes that he could not.

"Can you not?"

Again Bohun made the same sign.

"So much the better; you will not be able to speak or cry out, or move; while I will travel to Lubni with the young princess. If I do not carry her away from under your nose, may some old woman grind me to powder in her mill! How, you villain, do you think I have not had enough of your society? I can not be friends with asses of common people any longer. No! rascal; you believed that for the sake of your wine and your peasant love affairs that I would lend myself to murder and rebellion. No; nothing can come of that, my handsome lad."

The more vehemently Zagloba spoke, the wider did the eyes of the Cossack leader open. "Was he dreaming? Was

he awake? Was this a joke of Zagloba's?" Zagloba however continued:

"Why do you fix your goggle eyes upon me like a tom-cat in the dark? Do you think I will not do it? Perhaps you would like to send a message to some one in Lubni Perhaps I had better send you a doctor from there. Perhaps even order the prince's doctor to come to you?"

The chief's pale face assumed a frightful expression; he understood that Zagloba was speaking the truth; from his eyes flashed looks of despair and rage; a fiery red overspread his countenance. With a superhuman effort, he raised himself and from his lips came a scream:

"Hey! Semen—"

He could not finish for Zagloba had thrown his own coat over his head with the swiftness of lightning and completely wrapped him up in it. Then he pushed him back on the divan.

"Do not scream for that might injure you," he said softly and coaxingly, "to-morrow your head might ache, and, as your friend, I am anxious about you. So, so! now, you will be warm; you will sleep finely, and not cry too loud. In order, however, that you may not tear off your covering I will tie your hands, and all through friendship, in order that you may remember me with gratitude."

Then he tied the hands of the Cossack with his belt, made the knot fast; and, with his own belt, tied his feet. The Cossack leader was conscious of nothing; he had fainted.

"A sick man must lie quiet," said Zagloba, "that the blood may not go to his head and cause delirium. Now farewell, I could kill you with a dagger thrust and that might be best for me, but I am ashamed to commit murder like a peasant. And, besides, if you choke by to-morrow that has happened to many swine. Now, farewell, and return my love. Perhaps we shall meet again some day, but, if I should seek a meeting, let them flay me and make straps out of my skin."

Then Zagloba went into the hall, put out the fire and knocked at the door of Vasil's room.

A slender figure stepped forward.

"Is it you, Princess?" asked Zagloba.

"It is I."

"Well, come on, so that we can mount. They are all drunk over there and the night is dark. Before they awake we shall be far away. Carefully, here lie the princes."

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," whispered Helena.

CHAPTER III.

Two riders rode slowly and quietly through the woody ravine which lay close by Rozloga. The night was very dark for the moon had long since gone down and heavy clouds covered the horizon. In the ravine one could scarcely see three steps beyond the horses, and consequently they frequently stumbled over snags and roots of trees which lay in their path. For some time they rode very cautiously and, as they came to the end of the ravine and saw before them the open steppes which from the reflection of some lighter clouds was a little clearer than the wood, one of the horsemen whispered:

"Spur!"

Like two arrows sent from a Tartar bow, their horses flew along and the tramp was the only sound heard. Beneath the tramp of the horses the dreary steppes seemed to disappear behind them. Single oaks, that stood here and there on the road, looking like ghosts were passed with the swiftness of lightning, and they rode so long without rest and refreshment, that the horses' ears finally drooped and they began to snort with exhaustion and began to flag.

"It cannot be helped. We must ride more slowly," said the stouter horseman.

Early dawn was just beginning to drive away darkness from the steppes. By degrees larger expanses became light. The thistle on the steppes gleamed in the pale light, the distant woods and mounds became visible; the air grew gradually brighter and brighter. The white gleams presently lighted up the faces of the travellers.

They were Zagloba and Helena.

"It cannot be helped; we must ride more slowly," repeated Zagloba. "Our horses galloped yesterday from Chigrin to Rozloga, without breathing, and they cannot hold out much longer. I am afraid they may fall. How do you feel, young lady?"

Zagloba looked at his companion and exclaimed without waiting for an answer:

"Allow me, young lady, to look at you by daylight. Ho! Ho! Are these your cousin's clothes? By God! Princess, you're a pretty Cossack. As long as I have lived, I have never had such a squire—but I think Skshetuski will soon take you away from me. But what does this mean? For God's sake tuck that hair away or else no one will mistake your sex."

Indeed, a shower of raven hair had fallen over Helena's shoulders; the hasty ride and the damp night air having loosened it.

"Whither are we riding," she asked as she twisted her hair with both hands and endeavored to tuck it up under her little cap.

"Whither our eyes lead."

"Not to Lubni?"

Helena's features expressed uncasiness and, beneath Zagloba's keen glances, newly awakened distrust was visible in her countenance.

"Look here, Princess, I exercise my own good judgmeent and you may believe that I have calculated everything before hand, and my calculations are based upon the following wise maxim: "Do not fly in the direction in which you are likely to be pursued; if anyone pursues us now, they will follow us in the direction of Lubni, for I made no secret of it when I inquired the way and took leave of Bohun, that we were going to fly to Lubni. Ergo! we will fly to Cherkass; if they finally do follow us, it will not be soon, not until they have convinced themselves that we are not on the road to Lubni; and that will take away two days of their time. Meanwhile, we shall be in Cherkass where the Polish regiments, squadrons of Pivnitski and Rudomin are now stationed. And in Korsun are the entire forces of the hetman. Now do you understand, princess?"

"I understand and will thank you as long as I live. I do not know who you are, nor how you came to Rozloga; but I believe that God has sent you to save and protect me, for I would sooner have put a dagger to my breast than have fallen into the hands of that murderer."

"He is a dragon who wants to prey upon your innocence."

"What had I done to him, unfortunate me, that he should have pursued me. I have known him since childhood and from childhood he has always awakened fear in me. Am I then the only one in the world, that he should love me: that

he should have shed so much blood on my account; that he should have murdered my cousins? . . God! when I think of it, my blood congeals. What shall I do; where seek refuge from him? Do not be surprised at my complaints, for I am unhappy, I am ashamed to have inspired such love, and would rather die a thousand times than return it."

Helena's cheeks were flaming. Tears of anger, pain, and contempt coursed down her cheeks."

"I will not deny," said Zagloba, "that a great misfortune has happened to your house; but, let me tell you, Princess, that your relations were chiefly to blame for their misfortunes. They should not have promised your hand to the Cossack and then betrayed him; for when he heard of it, he flew into such a rage that I could not reason with him. I am sorry for your murdered cousins, especially the youngest; he was yet almost a child, but one could see that he would develop into a brave knight."

Helena began to cry.

"Tears do not suit the garments you are wearing, Princess, and let us say that it was the will of God. God will surely punish the murderer, who indeed is already punished; for he shed blood in vain and lost you, Princess, the chief and only object of his passion."

Zagloba was silent, but after awhile he continued:

"Ah! but he would like to tear me to pieces—Great God! if he could only get me into his hands he would make lizard leather out of my skin. You do not know, Princess, that I received a pale in Galatz from the Turks but I had enough of it and I do not care for another and therefore I will not go to Lubni but to Cherkass. It would be well to get under the protection of the prince, but if they should catch up with us! As I was unhitching the horses from the post, I heard Bohun's servants wake up. If they had given the alarm they would immediately have set out after us and have overtaken us in an hour—for they have the princess's horses which are perfectly fresh, and I had no time to waste. This Bohun is a wild beast I tell you; I am so sick of him that I would rather meet the devil than him."

"God deliver us from his hands!"

"He has brought down ruin on his own head, for he left Chigrin, contrary to the hetman's orders; he has opposed himself to the Voyevoda of Russia and there is nothing left for him to do but to fly to Khmyelnitski. But his pride will

be laid low when Khmyelnitski is beaten and that may already have happened. Jendzian met the forces beyond Kremenchug, that were marching against Khmyelnitski under the command of Barabash and Kshechovski; and, beside this, Stephen Pototski has advanced across the steppes with his hussars. But Jendzian passed ten days in Kremenchug in order to repair the boats, so, before he reaches Chigrin, the battle may have been decided; we were expecting news every moment."

"So Jendzian brought letters from Kudak?" asked Helena.

"Yes; letters from Pan Skshetuski to the princess and to yourself; but Bohun took them away from him; found out all that was in them, and on the spot split Jendzian's head open, and then started out to wreak vengeance on the Kurtseviches."

"Oh! unhappy boy! he has shed his blood on my account!"

"Do not grieve, princess; he will live."

"When did it happen?"

"Yesterday morning. Killing a man is no more to Bohun than it would be to another to drink a goblet of wine, and he bellowed so after he read the letters that the whole of Chigrin trembled."

The conversation was interrupted for a time. It was already daylight; the rosy dawn streaked with bright gold, purple and opal, glowed in the eastern horizon; the air was clear and fresh; the rested horses began to whinny joyously.

"Well, let us ride on, with God on our side! The mares have rested. We have no time to lose," said Zagloba. They rode off at a gallop for half a mile without stopping—suddenly they perceived a dark object approaching them with amazing rapidity.

"What can that be?" said Zagloba slowly. "It is a man on horseback."

In truth, a horseman was coming towards them at full speed, bent over in the saddle; his face buried in the horse's mane, and whipping his horse, whose hoofs seemed scarcely to touch the ground.

"Who the devil can that be?" said old Zagloba. "And why is he tearing along so fast. Eh! how he flies," taking his pistols from the holster in order to be ready for an emergency.

Meanwhile the rider had already advanced thirty paces.

"Halt!" thundered Zagloba, covering him with his pistol. "Who are you?"

The rider suddenly reined in his horse, sat up in his saddle, but hardly looked up as he exclaimed:

"Pan Zagloba!"

"Plesnievski, the servant of the Starosta of Chigrin! What are you doing? Whither are you hasting?"

"Oh, gracious sir, turn round with me! Oh! misfortune! God's wrath! God's judgment!"

"What has happened? Speak."

"Chigrin is taken by the Zaporojians, the peasants are killing the nobles—God's judgment . . . "

"In the name of the Father and the Son, what do you say? Kheymlnitski?"

"Pototski is beaten; Pan Charnyetski a prisoner; the Tartars are making common cause with the Cossack, Tukhay Bey!"

"And Barabash and Kshechovski?"

"Barabash is dead and Kshechovski has joined Khmyelnitski. Kshevonos set out last night against the hetmans; Khmyelnitski started this morning at daybreak. An immense army. The whole country in flames, the peasants rising in every direction, blood flows! Fly, sir!"

Zagloba opened his eye to its fullest extent; opened his mouth, but could speak no word for astonishment.

"Fly, sir!" repeated Plesnievski.

"Jesus Maria!" cried Zagloba.

"Jesus Maria!" repeated Helena, bursting into tears.

"Fly, or it will be too late."

"Whither? Whither?"

"To Lubni."

"Are you hastening there?"

"Yes, sir; to the Prince Voyevoda."

"The devil take you!" cried Zagloba, "and where are the hetmans?"

"At Korsun, but Kshevonos is already fighting with them."

"Kshevonos or Prostonos (crooked nose or straight nose) the plague take him? Why should we also go there?"

"You're running into the lion's mouth; to your own destruction."

"And who sent you to Lubni? Your master?"

"My master fortunately made his escape, and my godfather, who is with the Zaporojians, saved my life and helped me to escape. I am going to Lubni on my own account, for I do not know where I can take refuge."

"Avoid Rozloga, for Bohun is there; he will also join the rebels."

"For God's sake! Help! In Chigrin it is said that the peasants in the Dnieper country may rise at any moment!"

"That may be, so see to it that you get on your way wherever you want to go. It is enough for me to think about my own skin."

"Yes, I will do so," said Plesnievski, as he put spurs to his horse and rode away.

"But avoid Rozloga," Zagloba called after him. "And if you should come across Bohun, do not tell him that you have seen me, do you hear?"

"I hear," answered Plesnievski. "God be with you," and he galloped away as if he were being pursued.

"Well, devil, thou hast an overcoat!" said Zagloba. "I have already pulled myself out of many dangers, but I have never been in such straits as this. Before us, Khmyelnitski, behind us Bohun; and this being the case, I would not give a broken copper for my front or my back, or my whole skin. I made a mistake in not flying with you to Lubni, but we cannot think about that now. Fie! fie! I have not enough brains left to oil my boots with. What shall we do? Where shall we go? In the whole of the Commonwealth, there is no longer a single corner where one can be safe from death. Thank you for such presents, let others take them!"

"Worthy sir," said Helena, "I know that my two cousins, Yur and Fedor are in Zolotonosha; perhaps they can help us."

"In Zolotonosha? Patience Princess; when I was in Chigrin I made the acquaintance of Pan Unyezitski who has property near Zolotonosha called Kropovina and Chernoboy; but that is a long way from here, farther then Cherkass. What shall we do? If we can go nowhere else we will go there, but we must get off the highway. Across the steppes through the forest it will be less dangerous. If we could hide a week anywhere, even in the woods, perhaps by that time the hetmans will have finished up Khmyelnitski, and it will be more quiet in the Ukraine."

"God has not delivered us from Bohun's hands, in order to destroy us. Have faith, sir!"

"Patience, young lady; I am regaining courage; I have been in various dangers; at an appropriate time I will relate to you, princess, what happened to me in Galatz, and you will at once see that things looked very bad for me then, and yet,

through my own wit, I escaped safe and sound, although my beard, as you see, has grown gray in consequence. But we must get off the highway. Turn out, princess; that's it; you manage your horse like the cleverest Cossack; the grass is tall; no eye can see us."

As they got farther into the steppes, the grass became higher so that they were finally completely buried and the horses had great difficulty in moving forward in this tangle of grasses which sometimes were so sharp that they cut the skin. They were soon so weary that they refused to move.

"If we want these mares to carry us any farther," said Zagloba, "we must dismount and take off their bridles. They will have to rest and feed a little, or we can make no progress. I notice that we shall soon reach the Kahamlik. I wish we were there already. But nothing is better than this high grass, for, once you are hidden there, the devil himself could not find you. Pray God, if only we do not lose our way!"

Then he dismounted and lifted Helena off her horse. Then he took off the saddle bags and produced some provisions which he had, with forethought, provided himself with before he left Rozloga.

"We must also refresh ourselves," he said, "for the way is long; make a vow to St. Raphael that we make the journey safely. There is an old fortress in Zolotonosha; perhaps it is garrisoned. Plesnievski has said that the peasants were rising beyond the Dnieper; H'm! that may well be; the people here are inclined to rebellion, but beyond the Dnieper the hand of the Voyevoda exercises authority; and it is a devilish heavy hand. Bohun has a sound neck, but if this hand should fall upon it, it will bend him to the earth, which God grant, Amen! Eat something, Princess!" Zagloba drew from his boot a case, which he handed to Helena; then he spread before her on a saddle-cloth some cold roast-beef and bread.

"Eat something," he said, "when the stomach is empty, peas and cabbage are in the head and if you want to keep your head clear eat peas and cabbage, and our head went wrong, for we would have done better to have fled to Lubni; but that cannot now be helped. The prince is certainly marching with his army to the Dnieper to aid the hetmans. We have lived to terrible times, for a civil war is, of all evils, the worst. There is no corner for quiet people. It would have been better for me had I become a priest, for which

office I had a vocation, for I am a peaceful, reticent man, but fate ordered it otherwise. My God! To-day I should have been canon of Cracow and would be chanting the hours, for I have a beautiful voice. Yes, indeed! in my youth I loved the girls! Ha! ha! princess, you would not believe what a beautiful boy I was! When I looked at a girl—you would think she had been struck by lightning! If I were twenty years younger, Pan Skshetuski would have to look out for his laurels. You are a charming little Cossack; I am not surprised that the young men are in love with you, and fall together by the ears. Skshetuski is not a bad fighter; I was present when Chaplinski got into a quarrel with him and he —it is true he had a little wine in his head—but he sprang up, took him by the head and, with your leave, by the seat, and banged him against the door. I tell you, Princess, that all his bones must have been out of joint. Old Colonel Zatsvilikhovski has told me about your fiance; that he is a great knight, the favorite of the Voyevoda; and I myself recognized that he was a soldier of great valor and of experience beyond his years. It is growing warm; your society, Princess, is very pleasant to me but I would give, I don't know what, if we were already in Zolotonosha. I see we shall have to sit all day in the grass and travel at night, but I do not know how you will be able to stand such fatigue."

"I am healthy; I can stand all the fatigue. I could ride now if it were necessary."

"You have the courage of a man. The horses have recovered; I will put on their bridles, that they may be prepared for any emergency. I shall not feel safe until I see the reeds and rushes of the Kahamlik. If we had not left the highway, we would have been nearer to Chigrin along the bank of the river; but this way will be a mile further. At least so I estimate it. We shall soon be on the other side of the river. I must tell you, Princess, that I am desperately sleepy. The night before last, we caroused in Chigrin; yesterday the devil permitted me to ride with the Cossacks to Rozloga, and, this night he carried me again from Rozloga. I am so sleepy that I have even lost the desire to converse and, although I am not accustomed to be silent—for the philosophers say 'the cat must be ready to hunt its prey, a man must be intelligent enough to talk'—yet I feel that my tongue is weak; I ask your pardon, Princess, if I nod a little."

"You need not make any apology," answered Helena.

Zagloba had needlessly apologized for his disinclination to talk, for since daybreak he had never ceased chattering; but now he was really very sleepy, so, as soon as they were mounted, he began to nod and his head bobbed forward and then backward until he was finally fast asleep. Fatigue, and the rustling of the grass caused by the horses going through it, had lulled him to sleep. Helena, on the contrary, was wrapped in the thoughts which darted back and forth through her brain like birds. Events had followed one another so quickly, that the girl could hardly recollect all that had happened to her. The attack on Rozloga; the frightful scene of murder; the unexpected assistance and flight; all this had occurred like a storm in one night and, besides this, many things had happened which she could not understand. "Who was this man who had rescued her. He had indeed told her his name, but this name gave her no clue to the motive of his act. How had he come to Rozloga? He had said that he came with Bohun. Evidently, then, he was his acquaintance and friend. If this were so, why should he save her and place himself in the greatest peril, and at the mercy of the terrible vengeance of the Cossacks? In order to understand this it was necessary to know Pan Zagloba thoroughly, with his restless spirit and his good heart. Helena, however, had only known him for six hours; and this unknown man, with the face of a vagabond and a drunkard, was her rescuer. Had she met him three days earlier he would have inspired her only with aversion and mistrust and now she looked on him as her good angel and was fleeing with him—whither? To Zolotonosha or elsewhere—she herself knew not yet. What a turn of Fate! Only yesterday, she lay down to sleep beneath the quiet roof of her home; to-day she is on the steppes, on horseback, in man's clothing, without a roof, without shelter; behind her the terrible Cossack who threatened her honor and her love; before her the burning torch of the peasant rebellion, the civil war with all its evils, terrors and horrors? And had she placed her entire confidence in this man? No; but on another who is more mighty, who is mightier than violence, mightier than war, murder, or fire.

The girl raised her eyes to Heaven:

"Save me thou great, merciful God, save the orphan, save the unhappy one, save the wanderer! Thy will be done, but grant me thy favor."

Had she not already experienced this favor? Had she not

been snatched from the most dreadful of men, saved by a divine incomprehensible miracle? The danger was not yet over, but perhaps rescue was at hand; for who knew where he might be whom her heart had chosen. He must have already returned from Sich; perhaps he was in these very steppes; he would seek her and find her, and then joy would take the place of tears. Sorrow, terror, and danger would be over forever—peace and comfort would take their place. The brave, simple heart of this girl was filled with trust in God and, the grass in the steppes around her rustled sweetly; the breeze that moved the grasses brought her happy thoughts at the same time. She was not so utterly orphaned in this world. for, beside her, rode one strange, unknown defender—and the other, known and beloved, would care for her, would never leave her, would cling to her forever; and he was a man of iron, stronger and more powerful than those who at this moment she saw in her mind.

The steppes murmured sweetly; the flowers gave forth a powerful and intoxicating fragrance; the red heads of the thistles, the white pearl-like buds of the eryngo and the clusters of mug-wort bent towards her, as though they recognized in this little Cossack with the long braids, the milk-white face, and the red lips, a fair sister. They bent towards her as though they would say: "Do not weep, little rosy cheeks, we are also in God's care." And thus, there came to her from the steppes, ever deeper comfort; the pictures of murder and horrors were completely obliterated from her mind and a sweet languor came over her. Her eyelids grew heavy; the horses moved slowly; the motion rocked her back and forth—she fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

Helena was awakened by the barking of dogs; she opened her eyes and saw, in the distance, a large shady oak; a fence and a well before her. She awoke her companion.

"Wake up, worthy sir."

Zagloba opened his eyes.

"What is it? Where are we?"

"I do not know."

"Wait a minute, lady, this is a Cossack winter quarter."

"So it seems to me."

"Here are no doubt Chabans (herders[1]), not exactly agreeable society. Why do these dogs yelp as if they were bitten by wolves. I can see men and horses behind the fence, but there is nothing for it but to turn in so that they may not follow us as we ride by. You too must have slept?"

"Yes."

"One, two, three, four saddled horses—four men are behind the fence. Well that is no immense force. Yes! Yes! they are herders. They are talking at a great rate. Hey! there, men, come here."

The four Cossacks came at once. They were herders of horses, or trainers, who in summer watched the herds on the steppes. Zagloba remarked at once that only one of them had a sword and carried a gun. The others were armed with horses' jaw-bones which were fastened to sticks, but he knew that these horse herders were wild men and dangerous to travellers.

They all four looked inquiringly at the newcomers. There was not the slightest trace of friendliness on their copper-colored faces.

"What do you want?" they asked, without taking off their caps.

"God be praised," said Zagloba.

"For ever and ever. What do you want?"

[1] Tartar herdsmen.

LIKE TWO ARROWS THEIR HORSES FLEW ALONG.

With Fire and Sword.

"Is it far to Syrovata?"

"We know no Syrovata."

"And what do you call this winter-quarter?"

"Hushla."

"Give the horses some water."

"The water is dried up. Where do you come from?"

"From Kriva-ruda."

"And where are you going?"

"To Chigrin."

The herders looked at one another.

One of them, black as a beetle, with a squint, began to look closely at Zagloba and said, at last:

"And why did you not remain on the highway?"

"Because it is too hot."

The man with a squint laid his hand on Zagloba's bridle.

"You had better make haste and dismount, sir; you do not need to ride to Chigrin."

"And why?" asked Zagloba quietly.

"You see this Cossack," said the man with a squint, pointing to one of the herders.

"Well, I see him."

"He has come from Chigrin, they are killing the Poles over there."

"And do you know, blockhead, who is marching behind us towards Chigrin?"

"No. Who?"

"Prince Yeremy."

The bold faces of the herders became humble in an instant; as if at the word of command, they uncovered their heads.

"And do you know, fellow," continued Zagloba, "what the Poles do to those who slaughter them? They hang them. And do you know that he is barely a half a mile away from here? What, you dogs' souls! You bag-pipe. How have you received us? The well is dry! You have no water for the horses! I will show you, you sloths, you horse-brood!"

"Do not be angry, sir. The well is dry. We have to take our own horses to the Kahamlik to water them and to fetch water for our own use."

"Ah! you thieves!"

"Pardon, sir, the well is dry. If you command, we will go for water."

"I can get it without you. I will ride over myself with my servant. Where is the Kahamlik?" he asked angrily.

"Over there, two furlongs away," said the man with the squint, pointing with his finger towards the belt of rushes.

"And must I come back here to get to the highway, or can I get to it by following the river."

"Yes, sir, by the river bank. A mile from here, the river turns towards the highway."

"Boy, ride forward," said Zagloba, turning to Helena.

The pretended servant turned his horse on the spot and rode off.

"Listen," said Zagloba to the peasants, "if the advance guards come, say I have followed the river to get to the highway."

"Good, sir!"

A quarter of an hour later, Zagloba was riding beside Helena.

"I thought of the Voyevoda at the right moment," he said, blinking his injured eye. "Now, they will sit there the whole day, waiting for the vanguard. Terror seized them at the very name of the prince."

"I see that you have such a happy wit that you can save yourself from every danger," said Helena, "and I thank God that he has sent me such a defender." These words touched the nobleman's heart. He smiled, stroked his beard and said:

"Ah! Isn't Zagloba's head on his neck? Crafty as Ulysses! And I must tell you one thing, Princess, that if I were not crafty the crows would have eaten me up long ago, but what's to be done? One must save one self. They believed readily that the prince was approaching; for it is probable that he will appear in this region either to-day or to-morrow, like the archangel, with a fiery sword; and if he should on the way trample Bohun in the dust, I vow I will make a pilgrimage barefoot to Chenstohovo. And if the herders had not believed it, the very remembrance of the prince's power would have been enough to prevent them from attacking us. But I must tell you, Princess, that their boldness is not a good sign for us, for it signifies that the peasants have already got tidings of Khmyelnitski's victories and are becoming more bold. We must now travel along the desert places and avoid the villages for they are dangerous. God grant that the prince may come as soon as possible, for as I live we've got into such a trap that I was never in a more dangerous one."

Fear once more took possession of Helena and, as she wanted to get some assurance from Zagloba, she said;

"But I am quite confident that you will be able to save yourself and me."

"Of course," answered the cunning old man. "The head exists to think about the skin; and I've grown so fond of you, Princess, that I will take care of you as though you were my own daughter. The worst of it is that we do know whither we shall fly, for this Zolotonosha is none too safe an asylum."

"I know that my cousins are in Zolotonosha."

"They may be there or they may not, they may have gone away; and would certainly not return to Rozloga by the road we are travelling. I have more confidence in the garrison there, though only half a squadron or half a company were in the castle! But there is the Kahamlik. Now, at least, we have the rushes, and we will cross over to the other side instead of going along the bank to reach the highway; we will ride up the stream in order to efface our tracks. We go towards Rozloga in this way, but not far. . . . "

"We are approaching Brovarki," said Helena, "through which one passes on the way to Zolotonosha."

"So much the better. Rein in your horse, Princess."

They watered the horses; then Zagloba found Helena a good hiding place in the rushes and went to look for a ford. He soon found one some paces from where they halted. It was here that those herders had driven their horses across the river, which was shallow enough, though the banks were a little difficult as they were marshy and overgrown with brush. They crossed the river and rode hastily up the stream, without resting until night. The road was heavy, for many small streams flowed into the Kahamlik and at their confluence inlets and marshes were formed. They were obliged to look for fords or to make their way through brush, which was difficult for riders. The horses were dreadfully tired and could hardly drag their feet after them. From time to time, they seemed to collapse, so that Zagloba feared that they would never get any further. At length they arrived at the high, dry bank covered with oaks, but the dark night had already come upon them. It was impossible to continue their journey, for they might have ridden into dangerous swamps and lost their lives. Zagloba determined therefore to wait until morning. He took off the horses' bridles, tied them together, and let them roam in the meadow. Then he began to gather leaves and made a couch, which he covered with the horses' blankets and with a felt cloak, and said to Helena:

"Lie down, Princess, and sleep, for we have nothing better to do. The dew will sprinkle your little eyes, but that does not matter. I will lay my head on the saddle-bags for I am so tired I can hardly feel my bones. We will not light a fire, for the light might attract the herders. The night is short, and at daybreak we will ride on. Sleep quietly, lady, we have doubled on our tracks like hares, without putting much distance behind us, but we have blotted out our tracks so that, even with the help of the devil, no one could find us. Good night, young lady."

"Good night."

The slender little Cossack knelt down and prayed long, with eyes raised towards the stars. Zagloba took his saddle-bags on his shoulders and carried them to a little distance, where he had selected a place to sleep. The bank was well chosen for a night's rest, for it was high and dry, and free from mosquitoes. The thick foliage of the oaks provided a good shelter against the rain.

It was long before Helena could sleep; the events of the past night were still vivid in her recollection; from out the darkness appeared the faces of her murdered relations, her aunt, and her cousins. It seemed to her as if she were shut up in the room with their corpses, and as if Bohun were about to step into the room. She saw his pale face; his dark eye-brows drawn together from pain, and his eyes fixed upon her. An unspeakable terror seized her and, there, suddenly in the darkness that surrounded her, she saw, in reality, two gleaming eyes.

The moon peeped from out the clouds, and dimly lighted up the oak trees, and gave fantastic shapes to the branches and boughs. In the grass the rail birds called, and grouse piped in the steppes. From time to time various strange cries of birds and night animals were heard. The horses snorted as they grazed and sprang with their hobbles, moving further away from the sleepers; but all these sounds quieted Helena for they dissipated the fantastic faces and brought her back to reality. They said to her that that hall which continually haunted her vision, and those corpses of her relations and that Bohun, pale, with vengeance in his eyes, were only a deception of her senses; a creation of terror, nothing more. A few days ago, the prospect of such a night, under the open sky in the wilderness, would have frightened her to death; to-day she brought to mind that she was really on the banks

of the Kąhamlik, far from her maiden bower, far from the home of her childhood, in order to quiet herself.

So the voices of rail birds and grouse lulled her to sleep; the stars twinkled through the leaves when a breeze shook the branches; the beetles hummed amid the grass—and she finally fell asleep. But night in the desert has also its surprises. Day was already beginning to break when, from the distance, horrible voices reached her ear. A panting, howling, snorting, then a screech so horrible and painful that her blood ran cold. She sprang to her feet, covered with cold perspiration, terrified, and not knowing what she should do. All at once, Zagloba appeared before her without his cap, pistols in his hands and going in the direction whence the cries came. After a short pause, his voice rang out:

"Uha! Uha! Siromacha!"

A shot was fired, then all was still. It seemed to Helena as it were an eternity, but presently, she heard Zagloba's voice again on the bank below.

"May the dogs devour you. May you be flayed. May the Jews take you by the neck."

Zagloba's voice sounded with absolute despair.

"What has happened, sir?" asked the girl.

"The wolves have devoured the horses."

"Jesus Maria! Both of them?"

"One is dead; the other wounded so that he can hardly walk. They did not move three hundred paces away during the night, and now it is all over with them."

"What shall we do now?"

"What shall we do? We will cut some sticks and sit upon them. How can I tell what we will do? Here is a genuine despair! I tell you, Young Lady, that the devil is surely after us—and that is no great wonder, for he must be Bohun's friend or relation. What shall we do? If I know may I turn into a horse so that you at least may have something to ride upon. I am a knave, if I was ever in such a dilemma."

"Let us walk. . . . "

"It is well for you, at twenty years of age; but with my circumference, how can I travel, peasant fashion? But I am talking foolishly; for any peasant here has his nag and it is only dogs that walk. As God is dear to me, I am in despair. Of course we will not stay here. We will go on, but I don't know when we shall reach Zolotonosha. If it is not a pleasure to run away on horseback, it is still more disagreeable to go

on foot. It is the worst thing that could have happened to us. We must leave the straps and saddle bags here, and carry what we need for our mouth, on my own back."

"I will not allow you to carry it alone. If it is necessary, I also will help."

Zagloba gave in as he saw the girl was determined.

"But my dear young lady," he said, "I should be a Turk, or a Pagan, if I permitted that. Those white little hands are not for carrying burdens, nor those arrowlike small shoulders; with God's assistance I will manage it all alone, only I must rest a little more frequently, owing to abstemiousness in eating and drinking, I have short breath. We will take the saddle cloths with us to sleep on, and some provisions; but there will not be much left when I think that we must strengthen ourselves."

They at once sat down to refresh themselves and Zagloba forgot his much boasted abstemiousness and drew a deep breath. Towards noon they reached a ford, across which men and wagons had evidently passed from time to time; for on both banks were tracks of wheels and horses' hoofs.

"Perhaps that's the road to Zolotonosha," said Helena.

"Bah! there's none here whom one can ask."

Zagloba had hardly spoken when the sound of human voices was heard in the distance.

"Wait, young lady, let us hide," whispered Zagloba.

The voices approached.

"Do you see anything?" asked Helena.

"Yes, I see."

"Who's approaching?"

"A blind old beggar with a lute. A little boy is leading him. Now they are taking off their boots. They are crossing the river, and coming towards us."

The splashing of the water soon announced that they were crossing the river.

Zagloba and Helena came out of their hiding places.

"Praised be God," exclaimed the nobleman.

"For ever and ever," answered the old man. "Who is there?"

"Christians, fear nothing, old man, a good friend."

"May St. Nicholas give you health and happiness."

"And where do you come from, poor old man?"

"From Brovarki."

"And where does this road lead?"

"To farm houses, sir, and to village. . . . "

"Can one get to Zolotonosha by this road?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it long since you left Brovarki?"

"Early yesterday morning."

"Were you in Rozloga?"

"Yes, sir. They say that knights had come there, and that there had been a fight."

"Who said that?"

"They told it in Brovarki." One of the prince's servants came there, and what he told, was terrible.

"Did you not see him."

"I, sir, saw no one, I am blind."

And the boy there.

"He sees, but he is dumb. I am the only one that can understand him."

"Is it far from here to Rozloga, for we want to go there."

"Oh, yes, it is a long way."

"So you say you were in Rozloga."

"We were, sir."

"Indeed," said Zagloba, and suddenly seizing the boy by the neck. "Ha! you vagabond, thief, scamp, you are going about as spies, to incite the peasants to rebellion. Eh! Feodore, Alex, Maxim, take them away! Take off their clothes and hang them or drown them! But then they are rebels, spies, strike, kill!"

He began to shake the boy, and increased his loud shouting.

The old beggar threw himself on his knees and begged for mercy. The boy uttered frightful sounds, such as are peculiar to dumb people, and Helena looked in astonishment at the attack.

"What are you doing?" she asked, hardly trusting her own eyes.

But Zagloba screamed, swore, called upon the powers of Hell, called down all ill luck, calamities and all diseases of earth—and threatened with all kind of torments, and death.

The young princess thought he had lost his mind.

"Go away!" he cried to her. "It is not fit for you to see what is going on here. Go away, I say!"

Suddenly he turned to the old beggar.

"Take off your coat, old sheep, or else I will cut you to pieces."

Then he threw the boy on the ground and began with his

own hands to tear the clothes off him. The old man, in terror threw his lute, his coat, and his waistcoat on the ground.

"Take off everything; may the plague—" screamed Zagloba.

The old man began to take off his shirt.

When the young princess saw what was coming, she hastily moved away that her modesty might not be offended by the sight, and in her flight she still heard Zagloba's curses.

When she had gone quite a distance she stopped for she did not know what to begin. The trunk of an uprooted tree lay on the ground, so she sat down on this and waited. The cries of the dumb boy, the sighs of the old man, and the wild noise made by Zagloba came to her ears.

Presently all was still; only the twittering of the birds and the rustling of the leaves broke the silence. Shortly after she heard a loud chuckling and a man's heavy step.

It was Zagloba.

On his arm he carried the clothes that he had taken from the old man and the boy, and in his hand two pair of boots and the lute. As he approached, he began to blink his sound eye, to smile, and to breathe heavily. He was evidently in excellent humor.

"No lawyer in court ever screamed as I have done," he said, "and I am quite hoarse from it, but I have got what I wanted. I have sent them off as naked as when their mother brought them into the world. If the sultan does not make me a pasha or hospodar of Wallachia, he will be very ungrateful, for I have increased by two the number of Turkish saints. Oh! the rascals! they prayed me to leave them at least their shirt but I told them that they should be thankful that I left them with their life. See Lady, everything new; the waistcoat, the boots, the shirts? How can order be maintained in the Commonwealth when peasants dress themselves so luxuriously? But they had been at a festival in Brovarki; had begged enough alms to buy everything new at the fair. Many a nobleman in this country cannot get so much from his land as a beggar like that can. Hence, I will give up the trade of knight and will plunder the beggars on the highways; for I see that in that fashion one can more easily obtain wealth."

"But what was your object in doing this?" asked Helena.

"What was my object? Do you not understand, Panna? Only wait a little. The object will soon become evident to you."

Then he took half of the stolen clothing and retired into the bushes on the shore. After a few minutes the sounds of a lute were heard and then he appeared—no longer Zagloba, but a veritable old beggar of the Ukraine with a patch on one eye and a grey beard. The old beggar stepped nearer to Helena and sang in a hoarse voice:

"Thou joyous falcon, my true brother,
How high thou soarest,
How far dost thou fly!

The princess clapped her hands and, for the first time since she left Rozloga, a smile lighted up her lovely face.

"If I had not known it was you, I could hardly have believed it."

"How is that?" said Zagloba, "you have certainly never seen a better mask on Shrove Tuesday. I looked at myself in the Kahamlik and, if I ever saw a handsomer singer, you may hang me up by my own bag. I have no lack of songs, either. What would you rather hear, lady, may be Marusia Bohuslava, or the Bondarovna or about Serpiahova's death? Oh, I can sing these too. I am a rogue if I canot earn my bread even among the greatest vagabonds!"

"Now I understand why you took away those poor fellows' clothes; so that we may continue our journey in this disguise?"

"Of course," said Zagloba, "what did you suppose. Here, on the other side of the Dnieper, the people are worse than anywhere else, and only the hand of the prince keeps them from committing crimes, and now, if they hear of the war with the Zaporojians and of Khmyelnitski's victories, no power can check the rebellion. You saw those herders who wanted to flay us alive? If the hetmans do not speedily conquer Bogdan Khmyelnitski, then in one, or two days, the whole country will be on fire, and how can I bring you through the crowds of peasant rebels? If we should fall into their hands, it would have been better for you to have remained in Bohun's"

"No, that could not be. I would rather die," interrupted the princess.

"But I prefer life, for death is an entity from which even the greatest intelligence can not raise you; but I think this way. God sent us those beggars and I frightened them terribly, just as I did the herders by telling them that the prince was close by, with his whole army. They will sit three long

days, naked, in the rushes, for terror, and we will meanwhile be clothed and make our way to Zolotonosha. If we find your cousins and assistance there, it is well—if not, we will go on till we reach the hetmans, or we will wait for the prince, and that in perfect safety; for there is no danger to beggars, either from the peasants or from the Cossacks. We can carry our heads in safety through Khmyelnitski's camp but we must avoid the Tartars for, believing you to be a young boy they would take you prisoner."

"Then I must disguise myself?"

"Certainly! Throw off your Cossack disguise, and get into this peasant boy's clothes. You're a little too pretty for a peasant boy and so am I for an old beggar, but that does not matter. The wind will brown your cheeks and my stomach will grow thinner from walking. I shall sweat away all my fat. When the Wallachians burned out my eye I thought that was a frightful adventure, and now I see that it was a very good thing; for a beggar who is not blind would excite suspicion. You, Lady, will lead me by the hand, call me Onufy, that is my beggar name. But now, dress yourself quickly, for we must go on our way as quickly as possible for it will be a long journey on foot."

Zagloba moved away and Helena quickly changed herself into a beggar boy. After she had looked at herself in the river she threw away the Cossack garments, put on the peasant's waistcoat, placed a straw hat on her head and slung a knapsack across her shoulder. Fortunately the boy that Zagloba had robbed was slender, so his clothes suited her very well.

Zagloba came back, looked at her carefully and said:

"Good God! many a knight would be proud to have such a nice boy for an attendant; and I know one hussar who certainly would, but we must do something with this hair. I have seen many beautiful boys in Stambul, but never such a one as this."

"Pray God that my beauty may not bring me any harm," said Helena,

But she smiled as she said it for Zagloba's admiration flattered her woman's vanity.

"Beauty never brings harm. I am the best proof of that, for when the Turks burned out my one eye in Galatz and wanted to burn out the other, the wife of the then pasha saved me on account of my extraordinary beauty, the remains of which you can yet see, princess."

"But you said that the Wallachians burned your eye out."

"Yes, Wallachians but naturalized Turks and in service under the pasha in Galatz."

"But they did not even burn out one of them."

"But it was the heat of the iron that brought on a cataract. It is just the same thing. What are you going to do with your braids, princess?"

"Well? I must cut them off?"

"Yes, we must do that, but what with?"

"With your sword,"

"One can cut off a head very well with that, but hair—I do not exactly know how."

"O, I tell you what I will do, sir. I will sit down beside this stump, and place my hair over it; and you can cut until you cut it all off, but do not cut off my head."

"Oh do not fear that, princess. I have often put out the lights when I was drunk and never cut the candle? I will not hurt you Panna, although it is the first time in my life that I have ever done such a thing." Helena sat down beside the fallen trunk and flung her heavy black hair acrosss it and looked up to Zagloba.

"I am ready," she said, "cut away, sir!"

And she smiled a little sadly, for she was sorry to lose her hair which was so thick that one could hardly span its thickness with both hands. Zagloba, also, did not enjoy the task.

He grasped the stump in order to cut better, and murmured:

"Tut! Tut! I would rather be a barber surgeon I think, and cut the Cossacks beards. I feel like an executioner setting to work, for you know, princess, that they cut off a witch's hair close to her head, in order that the devil may not hide himself in it and lessen the effect of torture. But you, young lady, are no witch, and that is why I dislike this disgraceful task; and if Lieutenant Skshetuski does not cut off my ears for doing it, I will consider him impotent. Truly I am all gooseflesh. Shut your eyes at least, princess."

"They are shut,' 'said Helena.

"Zagloba stood up as if he were raising himself in his stirrups for a blow. The smooth steel cut the air, and the long black locks glided over the bark of the trunk and fell on the ground.

"All right," said Zagloba.

Helena stood up and the cropped hair fell in a black circle

over her face, which was covered with blushes, for, in those days, it was considered a great disgrace for a girl to be shorn of her hair. It was also a great sacrifice on her part, to which only necessity would have compelled her. Tears were in her eyes and Zagloba, who was dissatisfied with himself, made no attempt to comfort her.

"I think I have done something dreadful, and I repeat to you, Panna, that Pan Skshetuski, if he be a true cavalier, ought to cut off my ears; but it cannot be helped, for your sex would have been guessed out at once. Now we can go forward fearlessly. I asked the old man about the road and held my knife at his throat while I did so. He told me that we would see three oaks in the steppes in the vicinity of which was a wolf's cave, and near the cave, the way led across Jarovka to Zolotonosha. He also said that peasants drive that way, so we may find a place in a wagon. Oh, these are sad hours that we are passing together. I shall never forget them. Now, we must leave our swords here, for it is not suitable for a travelling beggar and his boy to carry a mark of nobility. I will hide them under this stump. Perhaps, by God's help, I may find them again some day. This sword has seen many a fight and won many victories. Believe me, princess, I would have had a regiment to-day if the envy and wickedness of men had not driven me to hot drink. So it is always in the world. There is justice nowhere. Because I did not run like a fool into the midst of death, and because I had the good sense, like another Cunctator to combine forethought with bravery, Zatsvilikhovski at first said that I was cowardly. He is a good fellow but has a bad tongue. It is not long since he twitted me for keeping fellowship with the Cossacks and, without this fellowship, princess, you would certainly not have escaped Bohun's power."

As he spoke, Zagloba placed a sword under the stump, and covered it with grasses and weeds, then he threw the saddle-bag and lute across his shoulders, took the stick pointed with flint for striking fire in his hand, whirled it in the air two or three times, and said:

"Come, that's not so bad. We can now strike fire and count the teeth of many a dog or wolf. The worst of all is having to go on foot, but it cannot be helped, let us go!"

They started, the black-haired boy walking ahead and the old man following. The old man grunted and cursed, for he was warm from walking although a wind was blowing across

the steppes. This wind gave a dark tinge to the cheeks of the pretty boy. They presently came to a hollow, at the bottom of which was a spring which poured its crystal waters into the Kahamlik. In the vicinity of this hollow, not far from the river, there grew, upon a slight eminence, three mighty oaks. Our wanderers turned in their direction. They soon found the traces of the path which, in the steppes, was marked by yellow blossoms that sprang up out of the cow-manure. The road was deserted, no Chumaks were to be seen; no cattle wending their way slowly along the road. Only here and there, lay their bones, which the wolves had brought here and which gleamed white in the sun. The wanderers continued their way without interruption, except that they rested awhile under the oaks. The black-haired boy lay down to sleep in the grass and the old man watched. They crossed streams and where they was no ford they walked along the bank looking for one. Sometimes the old man would carry the boy across on one arm, with such ease as to create astonishment with a man who carried a beggar's staff; But he was a stout old man. They walked thus until evening, till finally the boy sat down beside the road fringed by an oak forest and said:

"I have no more breath; my strength is going; I can go no farther. I will lie down here and die."

The old man was filled with dreadful anxiety.

"Oh this cursed wilderness," said he, "no village, no cabin, no living soul on the road; but we cannot remain here during the night. The night is already falling, in an hour it will be dark, but listen."

The old man paused and for a moment absolute silence reigned. It was suddenly interrupted by a prolonged, dismal sound that seemed to come from the bowels of the earth and, in truth, came out of the ravine that lay not far from the road.

"Those are wolves," said Zagloba; "last night we had horses, and they ate them up; now they would like to eat us. I have a pistol under my waistcoat, but I do not know if I have enough powder for two shots and I would not like to be a marcepan at the wolves' wedding. Listen, princess—again!"

The howling was heard again and appeared to be nearer.

"Get up child," said the old man. If you cannot walk, I will carry you. What shall we do? I see that I have already

grown to like you, and it is probably because I am unmarried and have no lawful heirs; if I have unlawful ones they are Mussulmans, for I have lived long in Turkey. The race of Zagloba with his coat of arms "in the brow" will die out with me. You will care for me in my old age, but now get up or let me carry you on my shoulders."

"My feet are so heavy that I can hardly move."

"And there you were, boasting of your strength, young lady. But quiet, quiet, for God's sake, I hear dogs barking! Yes, yes, they are dogs, not wolves. Demianovka must be quite near, as the old man said. God be praised and thanked! I was just wondering whether we had not better make a fire to keep away the wolves; but we should have certainly both of us gone to sleep for we were both exhausted. Yes, yes, those are dogs, do you hear?"

"Let us go," said Helena, whose strength had suddenly returned.

They had hardly stepped out of the wood when they saw, at a distance of a few furlongs, the smoke from a number of cabins. They saw also three little cupolas of a Greek church covered with fresh tin that glittered in the dusk of evening. The barking of dogs became more distinct.

"Yes, that is Demianovka, it cannot be anything else," said Zagloba. "Beggars are always well received; perhaps we may get a bed and supper, and perhaps some good people will forward us on our road. Wait a minute, princess, that is a village of the prince and there certainly must be a vice-starosta, so we can rest ourselves and gather news. The prince must be on his way. Perhaps rescue will come sooner than you hoped; but—do not forget that you are dumb. I am already beginning to lose my own senses, for I told you to call me Onufry but, as you are dumb, you must not call me anything; I shall speak for you and myself and God be thanked! I can speak the peasants' patois as well as Latin. But forward, forward! See there are the first cabins already close by. My God! When will there be an end to our wanderings. If we could only get some beer, I would thank God for that also."

Zagloba ceased speaking, and they walked along, side by side in silence." Then he continued:

"Remember, lady, that you are dumb. If anyone asks you anything, point to me and say: Mm! hm! hm! nya! nya! I have noted that you are very quick-witted and it is a question

now of our skins. If we should happen by chance to come across a company of the prince's, or of the hetman's army, we would at once tell them who we are, especially if we can find a polite officer who is a friend of Skshetuski. You are really under the prince's care and have nothing to fear from the soldiers. Oh, what is that fire burning down there in the hollow? Ha! Ha! it is a blacksmith's—a forge! But I see a number of men there. Let us go there."

In the cleft which formed a kind of ravine, stood a forge, from the chimney of which golden sparks, like sheaves of wheat, and clouds of smoke arose, and through the open doors and numerous holes that had been bored through the walls, shone a bright light in which dark forms could be seen passing to and fro, inside the shop. Outside the blacksmith's shop a number of forms standing about in groups could be seen in the twilight. The hammers beat time on the anvil so that their echoes filled the air, and these echoes blended with the singing outside the shop, with the noise of conversation, and with the barking of dogs. When Zagloba saw all this, he turned to this hollow, struck his lute, and began to sing:

On the hillside at harvest
The reapers are seen
The Cossacks are moving
Below on the green,
And down the ravine.

Singing thus he approached the crowd of men who were standing before the blacksmith's shop. He looked about him: They were peasants, drunk for the most part; almost all held poles in their hands and at the end of some of these poles were fastened scythes or sharp pikes. The smiths in the shop were working at just such pikes and bending the scythes.

"Oh a Dziad! a dziad!" cried one of the crowd.

"Praised be God," said Zagloba.

"For ever and ever, Amen."

"Tell me, good people, is this Demainovka?"

"Demainovka? Why do you ask?"

"They told me on the road," contiued the old beggar, "that good people lived there, who would receive the blind singers, give them food and drink and entertain them over night and give them some pennies. Old man as I am, I have travelled a long way, and the boy beside me cannot go any further. The

poor fellow is dumb, and is leading me, for I cannot see. I am an unhappy, blind man. God will bless you, good people and also St. Nicholas, the worker of miracles, will bless you, and St. Onufry will bless you. I can see a little out of one eye, but the other has been blind for a long time, so I travel about with my lute, sing my songs and live, like the birds, on that which falls from good people's hands."

"And where do you come from, old father?"

"Oh from far, far away; but allow me to rest; I see that there is a bench near the shop. You poor fellow sit down too," he said to Helena pointing to the bench. "We have come from beyond Ladava, good people, but we have been away from home a long, long time and now we have come from the fair in Brovarki."

"And what good news did you hear there?" asked an old man, who held a scythe in his hand.

"We have heard a great deal, but whether it is good I do not know. A great many people are collected there; they said of Khmyelnitski, that he had beaten the hetman's son, and his knights. They also said that on the Russian bank of the Dnieper the peasants are rising against their masters."

A crowd of men soon surounded Zagloba, who sat beside the young princess, and from time to time struck the strings of his lute.

"And you, daddy, did you hear that they had rebelled?"

"Oh, certainly, for misery is the lot of us peasants."

"But they say that the misery will soon come to an end."

"In Kiev they found on the altar a writing from Christ the Lord, saying that there will be a frightful, horrible war, and a great outpouring of blood in the whole Ukraine."

The semicircle around the bench on which Zagloba sat closed still closer around him.

"What do you say, a writing?"

"Yes, yes, a writing, as true as I live! About war, shedding of blood. . . . But I cannot talk any more, poor old man, my throat is dry."

"Here, daddy, take a glass of gorzalka and tell us what you heard in the world. We know that dziads travel about everywhere and know everything. There were some here, not long since, and they told us that the last hour had come for the nobles, through Khmyelnitski, and so we have had our scythes and pikes ready that we may not be too late; and now we do not know if we should start in now and fight or wait for a letter from Khmyelnitski."

Zagloba emptied the glass, smacked his lips, then reflected a while and said:

"And who tells you that the time has come to begin?"

"We wish it ourselves."

"Begin! begin!" cried a number of voices, "if the Zaporojians have killed the lords, we will begin too."

The scythes and spears clashed in their powerful hands and gave forth an ominous sound.

Then there was silence, only the sound of the hammers on the anvil were to be heard. The future ringleaders waited to hear what the old man would say. The Dziad thought and thought, and then he asked:

"Whose men are you?"

"Prince Yeremy's."

"And whom do you wish to kill?"

The peasants looked confused.

"Him?" asked the old man.

"We could not lay hold on."

"Oh, impossible, children, impossible! I was in Lubni and saw the prince with my own eyes. He is terrible. When he cries aloud, the trees tremble in the forest, and when he stamps his feet, a hollow is formed in the ground; even the king fears him, the hetmans obey him, and all dread him. You could not kill him children, you could not kill him! You will not seek him out, he will seek you, and you do not know yet what I know, that all the Poles will come to his assistance and, mark this, that where there is a Pole there is also a sword."

Gloomy silence dominated the crowd. The old man struck his lute and continued, his face turned towards the moon:

"The prince is coming and with him as many red standards and flags as there are stars in heaven and thistles on the steppes. The wind goes before him and sighs, and do you know why it sighs, children? It is sighing for your misery. Before him, strides 'Mother Death,' with her scythe, and tolls a bell; and do you know what she is tolling? She is tolling your death."

"Lord have mercy on us," said in low tones terrified voices.

And again, no sound was heard but the clang of the hammers.

"Who is the prince's commissioner here," asked the old singer.

"Pan Gdeshinski."

"And where is he?"

"He has fled."

"And why did he flee?"

"Because he heard that pikes and scythes are being made, he was frightened and ran away."

"So much the worse; he will tell the prince about you."

"Why are you croaking like a raven?" said an old peasant. Well, now, we believe that the black hour has come to the lords; they will exist no more, neither on the Russian side of the Dnieper or the Tartar side; and then when there are no more masters, princes, but Cossacks, free men—there will be no rent to pay, no duty on brandy, no duty on flour, no bridge tolls; there will be no more Jews, for so it says in the writing of Christ of which you told us. And Khmel is as powerful as the prince; we shall see."

"God grant it," said the daddy. "The lot of the peasants is hard, and formerly it was different."

"To whom does the country belong? To the prince! To whom do the steppes belong? To the prince! To whom the forests, to whom the herds? To the prince; and ages ago they were God's forests, God's steppes; whoever came first took what he wanted and was subject to no one. Now everything belongs to the nobility and to the princes."

"You are right, children," said the blind man, "but I will tell you one thing. You know yourselves that you cannot withstand the prince, here, you know. Whoever wishes to slaughter their masters had better not remain here, as long as Khmyelnitski has not measured his strength with the prince, but fly to Khmyelnitski—at once, to-morrow; for the prince is already on his way. If Pan Gdeshinski persuades him to come to Demainovka the prince will not let you live, but will hew you down to the very last man—so you had better fly to Khmyelnitski. The more of you he has over there the easier it will be for him to finish up the war! Oh, but he has a difficult task before him! First, the hetmans and the numberless forces of the king; then the princes who are more mighty than the hetmans; so run, children, to the help of Khmyelnitski and the Zaporojians, for the poor fellows will not be able to hold out—and they are fighting with the lords for your freedom, for your welfare. Be quick, and thus you will save yourself from the prince and help Khmyelnitski."

"He is right!" cried every voice.

"He is right!"

"Wise daddy!"

"So you saw the prince on the way?"

"Saw him? I did not see him, but I heard in Brovarki that he had already started from Lubni. He is burning and cutting wherever he sees a pike. Earth and sky are all that escape him."

"Lord have mercy on us?"

"And where shall we find Khmyelnitski?"

"That is why I came here, children, on purpose to tell you where you can find him. Go, children, to Zolotonosha, and from there to Trekhtimirov, and there you will find Khmyelnitski waiting for you. The people are flocking there from all villages, hamlets, and farms. The Tartars are also coming there. Otherwise the prince would not allow you to wander on your mother earth."

"And you father, will go with us?"

"I cannot go, for my old feet will not carry me any longer, but get a wagon ready for me and I will travel with you; and before we get to Zolotonosha I will go on ahead to see if the Prince's armies are there. If they are there, we will turn out of the road and go directly to Trekhtimirov, for that is Cossack land. And now, give me something to eat and drink for I am hungry, and my boy is hungry. Early to-morrow morning we will start out, and on the way I will sing you about Prince Pototski and Prince Yeremy. Oh! those terrible lions! There will be a great shedding of blood in the Ukraine. The sky is very red and the moon floats as if in blood. Pray, children, for God's mercy; for many of you will not wander much longer on earth. I also heard that the vampires are rising from the graves and howling."

The assembled crowd of peasants were seized with terror and, involuntarily began to look around them, to cross themselves, and to whisper to one another. At length, one called out:

"To Zolotonosha!"

"To Zolotonosha!" repeated all the men, as though they would there find refuge and safety.

"To Trekhtimirov!"

"Death to the Poles, and the nobles!"

Suddenly a young Cossack stepped forward out of the crowd, shook his pike and cried:

"Brothers, if we are to go to Zolotonosha, let us go to-day to the house of the Commissioner."

"To the Commissioner's house!" cried all the voices at once.

"Burn! Plunder!"

But the old beggar who had been sitting with his head sunk on his breast, got up and said:

"Hey, children, do not go to the Commissioner! Do not burn, it might be the worse for you. The prince with his army may be in the neighborhood, notice the fire, and come. Then there will be trouble. Instead of that, give me something to eat and show me my couch. It will be better for you to sit quietly and not to buzz out about like bees."

"What he says is true," called several voices.

"What he says is true? You are a fool, Maxim."

"Come, father, to my house! I will give you bread and salt and a cup of mead and, when you have eaten, you shall have some hay to sleep on in the cabin," said the old peasant turning to the old man.

Zagloba stood up and pulled Helena by the sleeve of her jerkin. The young princess had fallen asleep.

"The boy walked until he was tired and I fell asleep myself even under the sound of the anvil," said Zagloba. But in his soul he thought:

"Oh! sweet innocence, that can sleep in the midst of spears and knives! The angels of heaven must guard thee and in guarding thee they will also protect me."

He waked her up and they went into the village, which was not far off. The night was beautiful and peaceful. The echo of the hammers followed them. The old peasant went ahead to show them the way in the darkness, and Zagloba seemed to be repeating a prayer, and murmured in a monotonous voice:

"Oh, Father in heaven, have mercy on us sinners. . . . . Do you see Lady? . . . . Holy Virgin. . . . . What would we have done without the peasants' dress. . . . . As it is on earth, so it is in heaven. Now we shall get something to eat and to-morrow we will go to Zolotonosha in a wagon instead of on foot. . . . . Amen, Amen, Amen. . . . It is possible that Bohun will find our tracks, for our tracks will not deceive him. . . . Amen! Amen! But he will be too late for we shall be beyond Prohorowka. . . . . The devil is not a terror to the good. . . . . the land here will be in flames in a few days if the prince should advance towards the Dnieper. . . . . Amen. . . . . May the plague . . . May the devil get them. . . . Listen, Princess, how they are howling

over there at the forge. . . . Amen. . . . It is a heavy task but I am a rogue if I do not rescue you; even if we have to fly to Warsaw. . . . "

"What are you mumbling about there, old man?" asked the peasant.

"Nothing. I am praying for your welfare. Amen, Amen."

"That is my cabin over there."

"Praise be God!"

"For ever and ever! I invite you to bread and salt."

"God will reward."

A few moments later the blind man was partaking of mutton, and drinking mead freely; and the following day he set out with his boy in a comfortable wagon to Zolotonosha, accompanied by several peasants, armed with pikes and scythes. They passed by Kavrayets, Chernobay and Kropivna. On the road they saw that everything was in a ferment. The peasants were arming themselves in all directions. The forges in the ravines worked day and night, and it was only the name of the dreaded Prince Yeremy that still kept down the bloodthirsty revolt.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Dnieper, the storm had broken in its full rage; the news of the defeat at Korsun had spread over the whole of Russia with lightning speed, and everybody seized their weapons.

CHAPTER V.

The morning after Zagloba's flight, Bohun's men found him almost smothered in the cloak that Zagloba had wound about his head. As he had no severe wounds, however, he soon came to himself. He recalled everything that had happened, and fell into a fury, bellowed like a wild beast, covered his hands with blood from his own bloody forehead, and darted among his men with his dagger in his hand, so that his Semenovs did not dare to approach him. Then, he could not sit on his horse; he had a Jew cradle arranged and placed between two horses, got into it and rushed like a lunatic in the direction of Lubni, because he thought that the fugitives had gone there. He lay there in the Jew cradle, in the midst of down and of his own blood, and tore through the steppes like a vampire who, terrified by the morning light, is flying to its grave; and behind him came his faithful Semenovs in the firm conviction that they were hastening to their death. In this manner they reached Vasilovka, where there was a garrison of a hundred men of the Hungarian cavalry belonging to the prince. The wild Cossack leader attacked them unhesitatingly, and, as though he were tired of life, plunged first into the fray, and after a battle of several hours slew them all, with the exception of a few soldiers whom he spared only that he might oblige them to confess through torture. After he had learned from them that no nobleman had been seen with a girl in this direction he knew not what to do, and for very pain dragged the bandages off his wounds. It was impossible to advance any further, for the regiments of the prince were stationed around Lubni and these would certainly been made aware of the battle by the inhabitants of Vasilovka who had fled in terror. The faithful soldiers therefore obliged the ataman who was exhausted from rage to go back with them to Rozloga, but on their return they found no trace remaining of the castle, for the peasants of the neighborhood had plundered and burned it down, together with Prince Vasil; hoping that if the princes or Prince Yeremy wished to revenge themselves they would lay the

whole blame upon the Cossacks and Bohun. Therefore they had burned down all the buildings, destroyed the cherry orchard, killed all the servants; for the peasants avenged themselves without mercy for the hard treatment and oppression which they had experienced from the Kurtsevichi. Immediately behind Rozloga, Pleshnievski fell into Bohun's hands as he was coming from Chigrin with news of the defeat near the Zolta Woda. They asked him where he was going and on what errand, and as he became confused and could give no clear answer, they suspected him. They held him over the fire until he told all that he knew about the defeat, and about Zagloba whom he had met the previous day. The Cossack leader breathed freely. He hung Pleshnievski, and travelled on now with a firm conviction that Zagloba could not escape him. The herders gave him new directions, but when he came to the ford he lost all tracks. There was no danger of his meeting the old beggar whom Zagloba had plundered, for he had gone in another direction, down the Kahamlik, and was, besides, so terrified that he hid himself in the rushes like a fox.

Meanwhile, a day and a night passed, as the pursuit in the direction of Vasilovki took exactly two days, Zagloba had gained an immense advantage. What was to be done now?

In this dilemma Bohun received assistance and advice from the sergeant, an old wolf of the steppes, who from his youth up had learned to track the Tartars in the Wild Lands.

"Little father," he said, "they fled to Chigrin. And they have done wisely for they have gained time—but when they heard about Khmyelnitski and learned about the defeat at the Zolta Woda from Pleshnievski they took another road. You saw yourself, little father, that they left the highway, and turned off in a side direction."

"Into the steppes?"

"I could find them in the steppes, but they went to the Dnieper to try and reach the hetmans—therefore they must have gone to Cherkass or to Zolotonosha and Prokhorovka. . . And even if they have gone to Pereyaslav, although I do not believe they have, we will yet find them. We must go one to Cherkass, the other to Zolotonosha upon the Tschumak road —and without loss of time, for if they cross the Dnieper, they will speed to the hetmans or else fall into the hands of Khmyelnitski's Tartars."

"Hurry to Zolotonosha, and I will go to Cherkass, good, little father."

"And be on your guard, for that is a sly fox."

"Oh, I am sly too, little father."

After they had thus arranged their plan of pursuit, they separated, one going to Cherkass, the other farther up country to Zolotonosha. That evening, the old sergeant, Anton arrived in Demianovka. The village was empty. Only the women remained behind, for all the men had gone to Khmyelnitski on the Dnieper. When the women saw armed men coming, and did not know who they were, they hid themselves in the cabins and barns, and Anton had to look a long time before he found an old woman who feared nothing, not even the Tartars.

"And where are the peasants, mother?"

"How do I know?" she answered, showing her yellow teeth.

"We are Cossacks, little mother, fear nothing, we are not Poles."

"Poles? the devil take them!"

"You wish us well—do you not?"

"You?" the old woman reflected a minute and "May the plague take you," she said.

Anton did not know what he should do when, suddenly, the door of the cabin grated on its hinges, and a pretty young woman stepped out.

"O young warriors I heard that you were not Poles."

"That's right."

"So you belong to Khmyelnitski?"

"Yes."

"Not to the Poles?"

"No."

"And why are you asking for the peasants?"

"We are only asking if they have gone away already."

"They have gone! They have gone!"

"Thank God! Now, tell me young woman, has not a cursed Polish nobleman with his daughter gone through here?"

"A nobleman? A Pole? I did not see them."

"Did anyone pass through here?"

"A blind singer was here. He advised the peasants to go to Khmyelnitski, to Zolotonosha, and said Prince Yeremy was coming."

"Where?"

"Yes, coming here; then he was to go to Zolotonosha, so the daddy said."

"And the daddy advised the peasants to rebel?"

"Yes, he did."

"Was he alone?"

"No, with a dumb boy."

"And what did he look like?"

"Who?"

"The old man."

"Oh, old, very old. He played the lute and complained about the proprietors, but I did not see him."

"And he advised the peasants to rebel," asked Anton once more.

"Yes, he did."

"Hm! God keep you young woman."

"God be with you."

Anton thought long and deeply. If this old man should be Zagloba in disguise, why, in the devil's name, had he advised the peasants to go over to Khmyelnitski? And then, where had he got his disguise? Where had he left his horses? He certainly went away on horseback! But, above all, why did he excite the peasants to rebellion, and warn them of the arrival of the prince. The nobleman would not have done that, and before all would have sought refuge himself with the prince; and if the prince should go to Zolotonosha, which was not impossible, he would certainly take vengeance for Vasilovka. Here Anton started, for a new picket on the gate suddenly took on the appearance of a stake.

No, this old man was only an old beggar, nothing more. It is not worth while to go to Zolotonosha? It will be better to escape in the other direction, but what then? Should I wait, the Prince might come, if I go to Prokhorovka and cross the Dnieper, I may fall into the hands of the hetmans.

This old wolf of the steppes did not feel comfortable now in the wide steppes. He felt also that the wolf in him met his match in the fox in Zagloba.

All at once he slapped his forehead.

"And why did this dziad send the peasants to Zolotonosha behind which lies Prokhorovka, and behind that again, on the other side of the Dnieper, the hetmans and the whole army of the crown?"

Anton resolved to ride in any case to Prokhorovka.

Should he learn, on reaching the river's bank, that the forces of the hetmans were on the opposite shore he would not cross the river, but ride up along its banks and unite with Bohun near Cherkass. In any case, he would get news of

Khmyelnitski along the road. Anton knew from what Pleshnyevski had told them that Khmyelnitski had taken Chigrin; that he had sent Kshyvonos against the hetmans; and that he himself was to follow them immediately with Tukhay Bey. As an experienced soldier and one who knew the lay of the land perfectly, Anton was certain that a battle had already taken place. In this event, one must know which side one must take. If Khmyelnitski was beaten the hetman's forces would swarm across the Dnieper in pursuit, and in this case, he would never find Zagloba; but if Khmyelnitski conquered . . . . Anton could not believe that this would be the case. It was less difficult to overcome the son of the hetman than the hetman himself. Easier to conquer the vanguard than the whole army.

"Ah!" thought the old Cossack, "our ataman would do better to think of his own skin than to think of the girl. At Chigrin, we could cross the Dnieper and from there escape to Sich while we have time; here, between Prince Yeremy and the hetmans, it is difficult to find a safe corner."

Amid such considerations, he rode hastily with his soldiers in the direction of the Sula which he had to cross on leaving Demainovka if he wished to reach Prokhorovka. They arrived at Mogilna, which lay directly on the river. Here, fate favored Antony, for although Mogilna, like Demainovka, was deserted, he found flat bottom boats and boatmen who had taken the peasants across the river as they fled across the Dnieper. The Dnieper country itself did not dare to rebel beneath the hand of the prince but, from all the villages, country towns, and settlements came the peasants flocking to join Khmyelnitski, and to fight under his banner. The news of the Zaporojian victory near the Zolta Woda flew like lightning across the whole Dnieper land. The wild people could no longer remain quiet, although they, themselves, were not oppressed for, as we have already said, the prince who punished the rebel was a true father to the peaceful settlers; and his commissioners were in constant fear lest they should commit any injustice to the people who were intrusted to their care. But to these people who, a short time before, had been transformed from banditti into agriculturists, justice, strict discipline, and order had become wearisome, and they fled thither where the hope of an undisciplined freedom beckoned them. In many of the hamlets, the very women went over to Khmyelnitski. In Chabanovka and Wisoki, the whole popu-

lation had left and had burned down their houses behind them, in order to make it impossible for them to return. In the hamlets which had not yet been deserted, the men were arming themselves with all haste.

Anton began to inquire from the boatmen if they had any news from the other side of the Dnieper. There was news, but it was contradictory, confused, and unsatisfactory. It was said that Khmyelnitski was fighting with the hetmans. Some said he was beaten, others that he was the victor. A peasant, who had fled to Demainovka, had said that the hetmans were taken prisoners. The boatmen judged that he was a nobleman in disguise, but they had not had the courage to detain him, because they heard that the prince's army was in the neighborhood. It was fear, indeed, that increased the size of the prince's army and made out of it an omnipresent force, for there was probably at this moment not a hamlet in the whole Dnieper country in which it was not said that the prince was near. Anton remarked that everyone took his troop for scouts of Prince Yeremy.

He quieted the boatmen and asked them about the peasants who had come from Demainovka.

"Certainly they were here. We took them over to the other shore," said the boatmen.

"And was there an old singer among them?"

"Yes."

"And a dumb boy with him, a little fellow?"

"Yes indeed."

"What did the singer look like?"

"He was not old but fat, and had eyes like a fish, with a patch over one of them."

"That's the man," grunted Anton, and asked again.

"And the boy?"

"Ah! Father Ataman, just like a cherub! We have never seen one like him before."

Meanwhile, they had reached the other shore. Now Anton knew what he had to do.

"Oh, we will bring the young thing back to the Atman," he murmured to himself; then turning to his soldiers, he cried:

"To horse." They flew along like a flock of frightened birds although the road was heavy, for the country was full of ravines and they came to one deep ravine at the bottom of which was a road that looked as if it was made by nature

itself, This ravine lead to Kavraytsa. They rode several furlongs without resting, Anton in advance on the best horse. They were almost out of the ravine when Anton pulled in his horse so suddenly that his hind hoofs struck the stones.

"What is that?"

The entrance to the ravine was suddenly filled with men and horses. Cavalry came into the path and formed into groups of six. There were about three hundred horses. As Anton saw this, although he was an old warrior, accustomed to all kinds of danger, his heart thumped in his breast and a deathly pallor overspread his countenance.

He recognized Prince Yeremy's dragoons.

It was too late to fly. There were not two hundred paces between Anton's troops and the dragoons, and the exhausted horses of the Semenovs could not have fled long before their pursuers. His men had also caught sight of the dragoons and came riding up in haste. In a few minutes, he and his men were surrounded on all sides.

"Who are you?" asked the Lieutenant.

"Bohun's men," answered Anton, for he saw that he must tell the truth as his colors betrayed him. As he however recognized the lieutenant, whom he had frequently seen in Pereyaslav, he cried joyfully:

"Lieutenant Kushel; thank God!"

"Ah; it is you," said the lieutenant, looking at the sergeant. "What are you doing here? Where is your atman?"

"The Chief Hetman sent our atman to the Prince Yeremy to beg for assistance, the atman has ridden to Lubni, and gave us orders to ride round here in the villages in order to catch the deserters."

Anton lied as if he were paid for it; but he counted upon this; that if the company of dragoons had come from the Dnieper they would not have heard anything about the attack on Rozloga, nor of the flight at Vasilovka, nor of Bohun's other deeds.

The lieutenant answered however:

"One would think that you were trying to fight your way to the rebels."

"Why, lieutenant, if we wish to go to Khmyelnitski, we would not be on this side of the Dnieper," said Anton.

"You are right," said Kushel, "Quite right. I cannot deny it. But the ataman will not find the Prince Yeremy in Lubni."

"Oh, and where is the prince?"

"He was in Pshyluka. He may possibly have gone to Lubni yesterday."

"That is a pity. The atman had a letter to the prince from the hetman; and asking your pardon, is your Grace leading the soldiers from Zolotonosha?"

"No, we were stationed in Kalenki, and have just received orders to advance to Lubni, as all the forces have gone; and from there out out the prince will march forth with all his forces. Where are you going?"

"To Prokhorovka. That is where the peasants are crossing the river."

"Have many fled?"

"Oh, very many, a great many."

"Well, God be with you!"

"We thank your Grace most humbly. God preserve you!"

The dragoons made way and Anton's escort rode from their midst towards the opening of the ravine.

As soon as they got into the open steppes, Anton halted and listened sharply and, as the dragoons disappeared from sight and the last echo of their horses' hoofs had died away, he turned to his soldiers and said:

"Do you know, fools, if I had not been here, within three days you would have been on stakes in Lubni; and now gallop as hard as you can, even if the horses should fall dead.

They rode forward quickly.

"We are in luck," thought Anton, "doubly in luck; first, in having escaped with a sound skin, and, secondly, because these dragoons did not come from Zolotonosha, and so Zagloba did not pass them; for, if he had met them, he would be safe from any further pursuit."

In fact, it was a very unfavorable circumstance for Zagloba, and fate seemed throughout to have shown him no favor, that he had not met Kushel and his company; for had he done so he would have been saved at once and freed from all anxiety.

Meanwhile the news of the defeat at Korshun had struck him like lightning in Prokhorovka. On the way to Zolotonosha the report was spread in all the villages and country towns, of a great battle, even of the victory of Khmyelnitski; but Zagloba did not believe it for he knew from experience that, among the people, every rumor attains immense proportions, and that they were particularly apt to make the most of Cossack victories; but, once in Prokhorovka, he could dis-

believe no longer. The terrible, ominous truth struck him like the blow of a hammer. Khmyelnitski had trumphed; the royal army was defeated; the hetmans were prisoners, and the whole Ukraine had risen.

Zagloba lost his head for a moment, for he was in a frightful position. Fortune had not been favorable to him in his journey for he found no garrison in Zolotonosha. The town was in a fury against the Poles and the old fortress had been deserted. He doubted not for a moment that Bohun would seek him and sooner or later would find his tracks. It was true that he had made cross tracks like a hunted hare; but he knew well the bloodhound who was pursuing him, and knew that this hound would not let himself be thrown off the scent. Thus Zagloba had, at his back, the revengeful Bohun, and before him, the surging sea of the peasant rebellion; slaughter, fire, the Tartar raiders, the bestial mob.

To escape these under such circumstances was an almost hopeless task, especially to escape with a girl who, in spite of her disguise, as a beggar boy, attracted universal attention by her extraordinary beauty.

It was enough to make one lose one's reason. But Zagloba did not lose it for long. In the midst of the confusion in his mind, he saw very plainly, or rather felt very clearly that he feared Bohun a hundred times more than he feared fire and water, rebellion and slaughter, yea, even than Khmyelnitski himself. He shuddered at the thought that he might fall into the hands of the terrible Cossack. "He would flay me," he repeated constantly to himself, "and here, in front of me, a sea of rebellion!"

There was one means of escape. To give up Helena and leave her to God's will, but he did not want to do that.

"It cannot be!" he said to her. "You must have bewitched me, and the end of it will be that on account of you, I shall be skinned."

He would not leave her. He would not entertain the thought for a moment. But what could he do?

"Ah!" he thought, "there's no longer time to search for the prince. Before me is a sea. I will dive into this sea; perhaps I can hide myself and, by God's help, get over to the other shore."

And he decided to cross to the right side of the Dnieper.

But at Prokhorovka that was not easy. Nicholas Potocki had taken for Kshechovski and his soldiers all the yawls,

flat bottom boats, caiques and small boats from Pereyaslav to Chigrin for Kshyvonos and the regiments under his command. There was only an unseaworthy flat-bottomed pont in Prokhorovka. A thousand men were waiting for this pont to get across the Dnieper. In the village all the huts, barns and stables and sheds were occupied by soldiers and everything commanded unheard of price, so that Zagloba was really obliged to earn his bread with his lute. It would be twenty-four hours before they could cross the river, for the pont had twice been damaged, and had to be repaired. He passed the night sitting with Helena on the bank of the river beside the fire, amid a swarm of drunken peasants. The night was cool and windy. The princess sank exhausted from fatigue and pain, for the peasant's coarse boots had rubbed the skin off her feet. She was afraid she might become very ill. Her face was dark and pale. Her wonderful eyes were dimmed. She expected every moment to be recognized in spite of her disguise or to fall suddenly into the hands of Bohun's men. A frightful spectacle was enacted before her eyes this very night. The peasants had brought from the mouth of the Rosa some noblemen who were attempting to seek refuge in Vishnyovyetski's dominions from the Tartar invaders, and they murdered them on the bank of the river. They bored out their eyes, and crushed their heads between two stones. There were, at that time, in Prokhorovka two Jews with their families. The savage mob threw them into the Dnieper and, as they did not sink, they took long poles and pushed them under the water. These proceedings were accompanied by wild noises and drunkenness. Intoxicated Cossacks frolicked with intoxicated Cossack women. Horrible laughter sounded ominously on the dark banks of the Dnieper. The wind blew fiercely on the fire and carried with it red embers and sparks which were extinguished in the water. From time to time, the hoarse voice of some drunkard called through the darkness:

"Save yourself, Yeremy is coming!" Then the mob would dash blindly towards the shore, crowd each other and fall into the water. Once Zagloba and the princess were nearly trampled under foot. It was a hellish night and seemed as it would never end. Zagloba begged a quart of brandy from which he drank himself, and also obliged the princess to drink; otherwise she would have fainted or fallen into a fever. At length the waters of the Dnieper began to gleam. Morn-

ing was breaking; day had come! a cloudy, colorless day. Zagloba was anxious to cross to the other side of the river as soon as possible. Luckily the pont had been mended, but there was a frightful crowd around it.

"Room for the old beggar, room for the old beggar," cried Zagloba, holding Helena before him with outstretched hand, and shielding her from the crowd. "Room for the old beggar. I am going to Khmyelnitski and Kshechovski. Room for the old beggar, good Cossacks, dear people, brothers, may the black death overtake you, you and your children! I do not see very well. I shall fall into the water and my boy with me. Make room little children! May you be paralyzed in all your limbs! May the plague take you and may you all perish at the stake!"

Thus cringing, cursing, praying, but at the same time pushing the crowd aside with his powerful arms, he pushed Helena forward first on the boat, and then, after he had climbed in himself with some difficulty, he began to cry again:

"There are enough here already! Why do you crowd so, you will sink the boat if too many of you crowd on it. Enough, enough, your turn will come and if it does not come. . . . ."

"Enough, enough," cried those who had found room in the boat. "Put off, put off!"

The oars began to move and the boat left the shore. The strong current carried it down the stream in the direction of Domontova.

They had hardly got half way across the river when they heard voices and loud cries from Prokhorovka. A frightful confusion had arisen among the mob who had remained on the shore. Some were running wildly towards Domomtova, others jumped into the water; others screamed, tossed their arms wildly in the air, or threw themselves on the ground.

"What's the matter? What has happened?" those on the pont asked.

"Yeremy!" cried a voice.

"Yeremy, Yeremy, let us fly," they cried.

The oars played violently against the stream, the boat darted away like a Cossack canoe. At this moment, some horsemen appeared on the Prokhorovka shore.

"Yeremy's army!" cried those on the pont.

The horsemen rode up and down the bank, moving quickly hither and thither and asking questions, finally they shouted to those on the boat:

"Halt! Halt!"

Zagloba looked across and a cold sweat covered him from head to foot; he recognized Bohun's Cossacks.

It was indeed Anton with his soldiers.

But as said before, Zagloba never lost his presence of mind for long. He held his hand before his eyes as though, being half blind, he must look for some time, and then, as if he were being flayed, he began to scream:

"Children, those are Vishnyovyetski's Cossacks. For God and the Holy Virgin's sake get quickly to the other shore! Those that have remained behind we must leave behind and we must destroy the boat, otherwise we shall all be killed!"

"Quicker! Quicker! We must destroy the boat," cried the other passengers.

Such a noise arose that they could not hear the cries from the Prokhorovka side. At this moment the boat stuck on the sand of the shore, and the peasants began to get out; but hardly had one or two of them got out when they began to wrench at the side planks of the pont and to chop it to pieces with their axes. The seats and the shattered sides flew about in the air. They destroyed the ill-fated pont as if they were mad; tore it to pieces, fear lending them all the more strength.

All this time Zagloba was screaming:

"Chop it, break it! Burn it! Save yourselves! Yeremy is coming! Yeremy is coming!"

While he was screaming, he winked at Helena with his sound eye and began to carry on a succession of very meaning blinks.

Meanwhile, at sight of the destruction of the ferry, the cries on the other shore increased; but the distance was so great that one could not understand what was said. The beckoning of hands looked like threats and only hastened the destruction of the pont.

In a few minutes, the boat had disappeared when, suddenly, a scream of terror and horror came from every breast.

"They have jumped into the water, they are swimming towards us," whined the peasants.

One of the horsemen had really jumped into the water; a number of others had followed him and they were swimming their horses towards the opposite shore. It was indeed a foolhardy act, for swollen by spring floods, the river had a more powerful current than usual, and in many places formed

eddies and whilrpools. The horses were carried away by the stream and could not swim straight across. The water carried them down with increasing swiftness.

"They cannot cross," cried the peasants.

"They are drowning."

"Thank God! Oh, one horse has already sunk."

"To destruction with them."

The horses had already swum about one-third of the distance across the river, but the strong current carried them steadily down. They were evidently losing their strength and sunk gradually deeper and deeper. Before long the riders were up to their hips in water. A few minutes passed. The peasants from Shelepukha hastened to the spot, in order to see what was going on. Now, only the horses heads were to be seen above water and the Cossacks stemmed the water with their breasts. But they were already half-way across. Suddenly a horse's head, as well as his rider, disappeared under the water. Then a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth . . . the number of the swimmers was growing smaller. On both sides of the river, a gloomy silence reigned; but all went down to the river to see what was going on. Two-thirds of the river had already been crossed. The number of the swimmers was smaller, but one could already hear the heavy breathing of the horses, and the voices of the Cossacks urging them forward. It was evident that some of them would reach their goal.

Suddenly, Zagłoba's voice broke the silence:

"Hey! Children, shoulder your muskets! Death to the prince's men!" Smoke arose, shots were heard, despairing cries from the river; and, in a moment, horses, riders, all had disappeared.

The river was clear. Only here and there, at a distance, in the swirl of the waves appeared a horse's body or a red Cossack cap.

Zagloba looked at Helena and blinked. . . .

CHAPTER VI.

Before Vishnyovyetski had found Skshetuski seated on the ruins of Rosloga, he had already heard of the defeat at Korsun, for Colonel Polanovski, an officer of the prince, had brought him the news in Sahotyn. The prince had stopped before this in Pshyluka and had sent Captain Boguslav Maskievich with a letter to the hetmans, in which he inquired where they desired him to station himself with his entire forces. As, however, Pan Mashkievich was a long time in bringing back an answer, the Prince marched to Pereyaslav and sent advance guards ahead of him on all sides with commands that the regiments which were scattered her and there in the Dnieper land should assemble as soon as possible in Lubni.

But there came news that several Cossack companies, stationed in the border fortresses, near the Tartars, had disbanded or had even gone over to the rebels. The prince saw his forces thus suddenly diminished and grieved over it deeply; for he had not thought it possible that these men whom he had so often led to battle should ever leave him. But when he met Colonel Polanovski and heard the news of the defeat he concealed this from the army and marched forward towards the Dnieper, with the intention of rushing blindly into the midst of the storm and rebellion, and either avenging the defeat, wiping out the disgrace of the army, or losing his own life. He thought, besides, that a small and, perhaps considerable portion, of the king's army had escaped defeat and, if the army were reinforced by his six thousand men, he might hope to be able to measure himself with Khmyelnitski.

As soon as he had arrived in Pereyaslav, threfore, he commanded little Volodiyovski and Kushel to send out their dragoons in all directions; to Cherkass and Mantow, to Syekerna, to Buchach, to Stayeiki, to Trechtimirov, that they might bring away all the boats that they could find in the neighborhod. Then the army would cross over to Rzishchov

from the left bank. The messengers learned of the defeat from the fugitives that they met on their road but did not find a single boat in any of those places for, as has been already said, the Chief Hetman had already taken half of them for Kshechovski and Barabash and the rest had been destroyed by the excited mob on the right bank of the river, for fear the prince might come. Nevertheless, Volodiyovski with ten men managed to reach the right bank on a raft that he had put together in a hurry out of tree trunks.

He caught a few Cossacks whom he brought to the prince. The prince learned from them of the immense proportions the rebellion had assumed and of the dreadful results that had already followed the victory at Korsun. The whole Ukraine was up in arms to the last man; the rebellion spread like a flood over the land and increased momentarily. The nobility protected themselves in their castles and fastnesses, but many of them were already in the hands of the rebels. Khmyelnitski's power increased with every hour. The Cossack prisoners gave the number of his army as already two hundred thousand men and, in a few days, this number might easily be doubled. That was why he remained in Korsun after the victory, and made use of the period of rest to entice more people into his innumerable ranks. He divided the blacks into regiments, made colonels of the atamans and the experienced Zaporojian sergeants, and sent vanguards, whole divisions, to attack castles in the vicinity. Prince Yeremy considered all this and saw plainly that, for lack of boats which would take at least a week to prepare for six thousand men, and that on account of the strength of the enemy which had increased beyond all expectations, he should in no way be able to cross the Dnieper. His council of war comprised Polanovski, Colonel Baranovski, commander of the vanguard Alexander Baranovski, Volodiyovski and Vurtsel and they were of the opinion that they ought to retreat towards the north to Chernigov that lay beyond dense forests, and from there, passing by Lubech, cross the river to Brahinov. This was a long and dangerous road, for beyond the woods of Chernigov on the way to Brahinov, there was immense swamps which the foot soldiers could hardly cross, to say nothing of the heavy cavalry, the wagons, and the artillery. The prince however was pleased with this advice, but he wished before taking that long journey, to go into his own country across the Dnieper to show himself here and

there in order to repress any immediate outbreak, unite the nobility under his wings, spread terror and leave the remembrance of terror in the minds of the people, which alone, in the absence of the ruler would be the guardian of the land and the protector of those who could not march forward with the army. Besides this the Princess Grizelda, the ladies Sbaraski, the court ladies, the whole household, and some regiments, mainly infantry, were yet in Lubni. The prince resolved to go there and take a last farewell.

That very day, the army marched out, Volodiyovski with his dragoons at their head, who although they were all Russians, without exception, were under absolute discipline and were transformed into regular troops, and surpassed almost all the other companies in loyalty. The country was still quiet; here and there, bands of ruffians had formed who plundered both the peasants and the landed proprietors as well. A considerable number of these were caught on the march and impaled; but the peasants had not rebelled. Their minds were in a ferment; there was fire in their eyes and breasts; they were arming in silence; they fled across the Dnieper, but fear, as yet, restrained the thirst for blood and murder. One thing alone could be regarded as a bad omen for the future, which was, that the peasants, even in the villages which had not yet gone over to Khmyelnitski, fled at the approach of the prince's army, as though they feared that the terrible prince would read in their faces what they were hiding in their consciences and that he would punish them without further ceremony. However, he did punish whereever he found the slightest sign of approaching insurrection, and as he was unbridled by nature, in his rewards as in his punishments, he punished beyond all measure and without mercy. One might say that at that time two vampires haunted both sides of the Dnieper—one attacking the nobility, Khmyelnitski—the other, the rebellious people—Prince Yeremy. The people whispered to each other that when these two met the sun would grow dark and the waters and all the rivers would turn into blood; but this meeting was still in the future; for that Khmyelnitski, the victor of the Zolta Woda, the victor at Korsun; that Khmyelnitski, who had reduced the king's forces in the dust; had taken the hetmans prisoner, and who now stood at the head of a *hundred thousand* warriors, was simply afraid of this Lord of Lubni, who, from the other side of the Dnieper, was setting out to

find him. The prince's army marched through Sleporod; the prince himself, however, had halted at Philipovo in order to rest, when news was brought him that envoys from Khmyelnitski with a letter were outside, and requested an audience. The prince commanded that they should be admitted at once. Six Zaporojians then stepped into the house of the vice-starosta where the prince was stopping; they stepped forward boldly enough, especially the spokesman, the ataman Sukha-Ruka, who could not forget the victory of Korsun and his newly acquired dignity of colonel. When they saw the countenance of the prince, however, they were seized with such terror, that they fell at his feet and dared not speak a word.

The prince, who was surrounded by his principal knights commanded them to rise and asked why they came.

"A letter from the hetman," answered Sukha-Ruka.

The prince fixed his glance upon the Cossack and said quietly, emphasizing each word.

"From a scoundrel, vagabond, and a bandit, not from a hetman."

The Zaporojians grew pale, or rather, yellow; let their heads sink on their breasts, and stood silently at the door.

Then, the prince commanded Colonel Mashkievich to take the letter and read it. The letter was couched in humble terms. In Khmyelnitski, in spite of the victory of Korsun, the fox triumphed over the lion, the serpent over the eagle; for he did not forget that he was writing to Vishnyovyetski. He acted with friendliness perhaps only to lull supicion and thus to sting more easily. He wrote that what had happened had been Chaplinski's fault; that the chances of fortune had overtaken the hetmans, and that it was not his, Khymelnitski's fault, but the fault of want of judgment on the part of the hetmans and because of oppressions which they tolerated in the Ugraine. He begged the prince, therefore, not to be angry with him but to graciously pardon him; in return for which, he would be the prince's faithful servant. But, in order to gain the prince's favor for his envoys and to preserve them from the prince's anger, he announced that he had freed Colonel Skshetuski who had been taken prisoner in Sich, and who was alive and well.

Here followed long complaints of Skshetuski's haughtiness; that he had not been willing to take letters from Khmyelnitski to the prince and thus grossly insulted his dignity as

hetman, and the dignity of the whole Zaporojian army. Khmyelnitski attributed all that had happened, from the defeat on the Zolta Woda to that of Korsun, to the haughtiness and mistrust with which the Cossacks were treated by the Poles. The letter closed with assurances of regret and his fealty to the Commonwealth, and of his submission to the will of the prince.

The messengers themselves were astonished at the contents of the letter for they had not known what was in it and supposed insults and bold challenges rather than entreaties. It was clear to them that Khmyelnitski did not wish to risk a battle at present with such a celebrated leader and that instead of marching against him with his whole strength, he was trying to create delay, and pretending humility, evidently in the expectation that the forces of the prince would be worn out by long marches and by battles and encounters with various Cossack detachments; in a word he was evidently very much afraid of the prince. The messengers therefore were more humble than ever and, while the letter was being read tried to read their fate in the countenance of the prince and although in coming they were prepared for any emergency they were now shaking with terror. The prince, however, listened quietly; closed his eyes from time to time, as though he wished to hide the lightning that was contained in them; but it was evident that he was curbing his terrible anger with a great effort. When Mashkievich had finished, he said nothing to the envoys but commanded Volodiyovski to take them away and keep them under guard; then he turned to his officers with the following words:

"The cunning of this enemy is great! He either thinks that he will lull me to sleep with this letter in order to attack a sleeping man, or he is trying to entice me into the heart of the Commonwealth, finish up the business there, and receive pardon from the King and from the Diet; and he will then feel secure. For if I wished to continue fighting him then, it would not be he, but I, that would be acting contrary to the will of the Commonwealth and I should be considered a rebel."

Vurtsel put his hand to his forehead:

"O astute fox!"

"What step do you advise me to take, honorable gentlemen?" asked the prince. "Speak boldly, and then I will tell you my own opinion."

Old Zatsvilikhovski, who had left Chigrin some time before and had joined the prince, said:

"Your grace can do as he pleases, but, if I might advise, I would say that your Highness has guessed Khmyelnitski's intentions with your ordinary penetration. They are exactly what he wants to do; nothing else. I think therefore we should pay no attention to his letter; but, in the first place, put the princess in safety, then cross the Dnieper and begin the war before Khmyelnitski enters into any negotiation; for it would be a disgrace and a dishonor to the Commonwealth if she should allow such acts to go unpunished, but (and here he turned toward the other officers) I do not consider my opinion is infallible and I am waiting to hear yours."

Commander of the army, Alexander Zamoyski, struck his sword, "Worthy Standard bearer, age and wisdom speak through you, we must cut off the head of this hydra before it grows and devours us."

"Amen?" said Father Mukhovyetski.

The other officers said nothing; they followed the example of the commander, struck their swords and ground their teeth; Vurtsel however said:

"My Prince, it is in fact an insult to your Highness that this vagabond has dared to write a letter to you; a Koshov Ataman bears a rank confirmed and recognized by the Commonwealth, even the Kurzen atamans can boast the same; but he (Khmyelnitski) has made himself a hetman and cannot be regarded otherwise than as a bandit; and, therefore, Skshetuski behaved in a praiseworthy manner when he refused to carry these letters to your Highness."

"I am of your opiniion," said the prince, "and as I cannot reach him myself, he shall be punished in the person of his envoys."

He then turned to the Colonel of the Tartar bodyguard.

"Colonel Vyershul, order your Tartars to behead these Cossacks; but to cut a stake for their leader and impale him at once."

Vyershul bowed his red head and went out. Father Mukhovyetski, however, who often undertook to restrain the prince, folded his hands as if in prayer, and looked imploringly into his eyes as though he would entreat for mercy.

"I know what you mean, Father," said Prince Yeremy, but it cannot be. This must be done in return for the cruelty

which they practiced on the other side of the Dnieper; and to maintain our dignity and for the welfare of the whole Commonwealth. It must be shown by such an example that there is some one who is not afraid of this bandit leader, and who will treat him as a highwayman; who though he writes humbly, indeed acts with boldness and commands like a sovereign prince of the Ukraine, and brings such paroxysms to the Commonwealth as she has not known in a long time."

"My Prince, he has liberated Lieutenant Skshetuski, as he writes," said the priest timidly.

"I thank you in his name for putting him on a level with bandits," here the prince knitted his brows, "but enough of this. I see," he added, turning to his officers, "that you all declare for war. That is also my wish. We will march, then, to Chernigov, gather the nobility on the way, cross the river at Brahinov, and then march towards the south. Now to Lubni."

"So help us God," said the colonels.

At this moment, the door opened and Rostvorovski appeared, the commander of the Wallach company who had been sent out three days before with three hundred horsemen, to reconnoitre.

"My Prince," he cried, "the insurrection is growing. Rozloga is burned down; the garrison at Vasilovka has been destroyed to the last man."

"How? What? Where?" was asked on all sides.

But the prince motioned with his hand and asked:

"Who did it, bandits or soldiers?"

"Bohun, they say."

"Bohun?"

"Yes, he himself."

"When did it happen?"

"Three days ago?"

"Did you follow his tracks. Did you catch informers? Did you ask for news?

"I followed his tracks but could not catch him, for three days had already elapsed. I obtained some information on the road. They went back to Chigrin and there they divided, one-half going to Cherkass, the other to Zolotonosha and Prokhorovka.

Then Kurshel said:

"I came across the company that was going to Prokhorovka, of which I notified your Highness. They said that

they had been sent out by Bohun to prevent the peasants from crossing the Dnieper, so I let them continue their journey."

"You acted unwisely, but it was not your fault. It is difficult to avoid mistakes here when treachery lurks in every step one takes, and where the ground is burning under one's feet," said the prince.

Suddenly he put his hand to his head:

"Almighty God!" he cried, "I remember now what Skshetuski told me; that Bohun had designs on the innocence of the young Princess Kurtsevich; now I understand why Rozloga was burned down! The girl must have been kidnapped. Here, Volodiyovski, come here! Take five hundred horsemen and set out at once for Cherkass; Bikhovyets with five hundred Wallachs will go to Prokhorovka, by way of Zolotonosha. Do not spare the horses; and whoever frees the girl, shall have Yeremiovka as a life property. Now hasten, hasten."

Then he said to the colonels, "And we gentlemen will go to Lubni by way of Rozloga." The officers hastily left the house of the vice-starosta and joined their regiments. The volunteers mounted their horses in haste; the prince's brown stallion, that he usually rode when on the march, was led forward. In a few minutes the regiments rode off, and proceeded like a long variegated glittering serpent along the highway from Philipovo.

At the turnpike, a bloody sight met their eyes. On the pickets of the fence they saw five Cossack heads, which looked with dead hollow eyes at the passing army and, not far from there, beyond the gate, on a green hill, the Ataman Sukha-Ruka was still writhing on a stake. The stake had gone through half his body but many hours of torture still remained for the unfortunate man; for he might live till evening before death would release him. Now, however, he was not only alive, but his terrible eyes followed the companies as they passed by; eyes which said: "May God punish you, your children, and your grandchildren, unto the tenth generation for the blood, for the wounds, for the tortures; may you perish, you and your race; may all misfortune happen to you; may you die a lingering death, which is neither living nor dying." And, although he was a simple Cossack, although he did not die in purple, nor in a gold embroidered cloak but in a common blue jerkin; and not in the castle

chamber but under the open sky, impaled on a stake; yet the torture, the death that hovered over his head covered him with dignity, and gave such power to his glance, such a sea of hate in his eyes, that all understood what he would have said, and the companies rode silently past him; and, in the golden beams of the midday sun, he towered above them, and gleamed like a torch on the freshly cut stake.

The prince rode by without casting a glance at him; the priest Mukhovietski made the sign of the cross over the unfortunate man; they had all gone past when a youth from the hussar regiment, without asking permission of anyone, turned his horse towards the hill, put his pistol to the ear of the victim and, with a shot, put an end to his torments. All trembled at the bold act, which was in contempt of all military discipline and, knowing the Prince's sternness, they thought the youth was certainly lost. The prince, however, said nothing, and acted as if he had heard nothing or was deeply sunk in thought—in fact he rode forward in silence and it was not until evening that he had the youth brought before him.

The lad, half dead with fear, stood before his master and thought that the earth was opening beneath his feet to swallow him. The prince asked him:

"What is your name?"

"Teleuski."

"You shot the Cossack?"

"Yes, I," stammered the youth, who was as white as chalk.

"Why did you do that?"

"I could not see him suffer."

Instead of being angry, the prince answered:

"Oh! you will yet see their deeds, at sight of which the angel of compassion will flee from you; but, as you have risked your life for the sake of compassion, the treasurer in Lubni shall pay you out ten golden crowns and I will take you into my own service."

All were astonished that this matter should have ended thus. Presently the news arrived that the advance guard were coming from Zolotonosha and attention was turned in another direction.

CHAPTER VII.

Late that evening beneath a bright sky, the forces arrived in Rozloga. There they found Skshetuski sitting upon his Mount Calvary. The knight was, as we know, overcome with sorrow and torture of mind and when Father Mukhovyetski had brought him back to a sense of reality, the officers took him into their midst and began to talk to him and to comfort; especially Longin Podbipyenta who, for a period of three months, had been in Skshetuski's regiment, and had been a liberal companion. He also wished to be a sharer of his grief and tears, and immediately made a new vow on his account; that he would fast every Tuesday until his death, if God would in any manner, send comfort to Skshetuski. Meanwhile the lieutenant, Skshetuski, had been brought to the prince who had taken up his quarters in a peasant's cabin. When he saw his favorite, he said not a word but held out his arms towards him. Skshetuski threw himself into the outstretched arms and the prince pressed him to his heart, kissed his head—and the other officers present saw tears in his eyes.

In a little while he spoke.

"I welcome you as a son, for I had begun to think that I should never see you again. Bear your sorrow bravely, and remember that you will have a thousand companions in misfortune who will lose wives, children, parents, relations, and friends; and your sorrow will disappear like a drop in the ocean, in the sea of universal sorrow. When such dreadful times are coming over the dear fatherland, no one who is a man and carries a sword can give himself up to his own sorrow but must fly to the aid of our common mother, and win peace of conscience, or a glorious death and a heavenly crown, and with it eternal blessedness."

"Amen," said chaplain Mukhovietski.

"Oh, my Prince, I would rather see her dead," sighed the knight.

"Weep, weep, for your loss is heavy and we will weep with you; for you are not among heathen, nor among wild Scyth-

WITH A SHOT, PUT AN END TO HIS TORMENTS.

With Fire and Sword.

ians, nor among Tartars, but among brethren and comrades who love you; but one thing say to yourself: 'To-day I weep over my misfortune, but to-morrow I will put it by, for to-morrow we are going to battle.'"

"I will go with your Excellency to the end of the world, but I cannot find comfort; for it is so sad without her that I cannot . . . . "

And the poor fellow put his hands to his head, then he set his teeth tightly to keep down the sobs, for a storm of despair was tearing him again.

"Thou hast said, 'Thy will be done,'" said the priest sternly.

"Amen, Amen. I bow to His will, but . . my sorrow . . . cannot keep it down," answered the knight in disjointed sentences.

One could see how he fought with himself; and his sorrow drew tears from all eyes, and the softer hearted ones, Volodiyovski and Longin were weeping copiously from sympathy. The latter folded his hands and repeated plaintively:

"Dear little brother, dear little brother, take courage."

"Listen," said the prince suddenly, "I have received word that Bohun has gone from here to Lubni, for he has slaughtered the garrison in Vasilova; so do not despair; perhaps he has not found her yet. For, why should he have gone to Lubni?"

"By God! It must be so," cried the officers, "God will bring you comfort."

Skshetuski opened his eyes, as though he did not understand what they were saying. Suddenly a glimpse of hope came into his heart and he threw himself full length at the feet of the prince.

"Oh, my Prince! Life, blood!" he cried.

He could say no more; he had become so weak that Longin had to lift him from the ground and place him on a bench, but one saw from his expression that he had seized this thread of hope, as a drowning man seizes a board and that his sorrow begun to abate. The others encouraged this hope and said to him that perhaps he would find his princess in Lubni. Then they took him into another hut and gave him mead and wine. The lieutenant tried to drink, but could not, for his throat seemed closed, but his faithful friends drank instead of him and, excited by the wine, they began to throw their arms round him and kiss him, and were astonished at

his leanness and the traces of sickness which they saw in his face. "You look like Piotrovin," said the fat Dzik.

"You got pretty well played out in Sich. They gave you nothing to eat or drink in Sich."

"Tell us what happened to you?"

"I will tell you, some other time," said Skshetuski in a weak voice. "They wounded me and I fell ill."

"They wounded him!" cried Dzik.

"Wounded? An ambassador," answered Sleshiniski.

And they looked at one another, astonished at the boldness of the Cossacks. Then they began to press each other out of affection for Skshetuski.

"And did you see Khmyelnitski?"

"Yes."

"Leave him to us, sir," cried Migurski. "We will make hash of him."

With such conversation, the night passed away. In the morning news was received that the second advance party that had been sent to Cherkass had returned. They had evidently not brought back Bohun and not caught him, but they had returned with strange news. They brought several people with them whom they had met on the road, who had seen Bohun two days before. These related that the Cossack leader was evidently in pursuit of somebody, for he had asked every one if they had not seen a fat nobleman with a Cossack boy; he was in a tremendous hurry and always rode off again at break-neck speed. Those people had said also that they had not noticed that Bohun had a young lady with him, but if he had they would certainly have remarked it, for Bohun had only a few soldiers with him.

Fresh hope as well as anxiety filled Skshetuski's heart, for these tales were absolutely unintelligible to him. He could not understand, in the first place, why Bohun should have taken the direction of Lubni; why he should have attacked the garrison in Vasilova and, then, suddenly turned in the direction of Cherkass. That he had not taken Helena with him seemed evident, for Kushel had met Anton's division and she was not among them, and the men whom they had just brought back from Cherkass had not seen her with Bohun. So where could she be? Where might she be hiding? Had she escaped, and if so in what direction? Why, instead of going to Lubni, should she have gone to Cherkass or Zolotonosha? And yet, Bohun's soldiers were following somebody in the

direction of Cherkass and Prokhorovka. And why had they enquired about a nobleman and a Cossack boy? To all these questions, the lieutenant could find no answer.

"Tell me, speak, explain to me what it all means," he said to the officers, "for my brain cannot understand it."

"I think that they must be in Lubni," said Pan Migurski.

"That is not possible," answered Lieutenant Zatsvilikhovski. "If she were in Lubni, Bohun would betake himself as quickly as possible to Chigrin to be in safety; but he would not go to meet the hetmans, of whose defeat he can know nothing; but if he divided up his forces and took two lines of pursuit I tell you it was on account of no one but the princess."

"But he was asking for an old nobleman, and a Cossack boy."

"It does not need any great sagacity to guess that she would not try to escape in woman's clothing, but has put on some disguise in order to evade all suspicion; and I think that this Cossack boy is herself."

"As I live! As I live, that is true!" repeated the others.

"But who is the nobleman?"

"That I do not know," said the old lieutenant. "But we can find out by asking questions. The peasants must certainly know who was here and what happened. Bring the owner of this cabin?"

The officers sprang out of the door and presently returned, bringing by the neck the "pidsusidka," who had been sitting in a neighboring shed.

"Peasant," said Zatsvilikhovski, "were you here when Bohun and his Cossacks attacked the big house?"

The peasant began as usual to swear that he was not present; that he had seen nothing, and knew nothing; but Zatsvilikhovski knew with whom he was dealing and said:

"I believe, you son of a heathen, that you were hiding under a bench when they plundered the house. You need not tell me that. See here, here is a gold piece and there stands a servant with a sword—choose! And, to finish up, we will burn down the whole village, and on your account, all the poor people will suffer."

Then the peasant began to tell all that he had seen. When the Cossacks were revelling in the farmyard of the castle, he had come away with the others to see what was going on. They had heard that the old princess and the young princess

had been killed, but that Nicholas had wounded the ataman and that he was lying there as if dead. What had happened to the young lady they could not find out, but early the following morning, they heard that she had made her escape with a nobleman who had come with Bohun.

"That's it! that's it!" said Zatsvilikhovski. "Here peasant, take this gold crown; you see no harm will happen to you. Did you see the nobleman? Was he from this region?"

"I saw him, sir, but he didn't come from here."

"What did he look like?"

"Stout, sir, as a stove, with a gray beard, and he cursed like an old tramp. He was blind in one eye."

"By Heaven," cried Longin, "that must be Zagloba, and no other. Ah!"

"Zagloba! Wait a minute. Zagloba! That might be. He made friends with Bohun in Chigrin, they drank and played dice together. That might be. That is his description."

Here Zatsvilikhovski turned to the peasant.

"Did this nobleman fly with the young lady?"

"Yes, sir, so we heard."

"And do you know Bohun well?"

"Oh, very well, sir; he used to stay here a month at a time."

"And perhaps the nobleman took her away with his knowledge?"

"No indeed, sir; he tied Bohun hand and foot, and wrapped his cloak round his head; and he carried off the young lady without any human eye seeing them. The ataman howled like a siromakh. On the same day, he had himself put into a litter, between two horses and tore off to Lubni, but he did not catch her there, and he started off in another direction."

"Praised be God!" said Migurski. "Then she may be in Lubni, for it means nothing that they followed her to Cherkass; for as they did not find her in one place they tried another."

Pan Skshetuski had knelt down and was praying earnestly.

"Well, well," growled the old lieutenant, "I would not have given Zagloba credit for so much courage as to undertake a quarrel with Bohun. It is true he was very much attached to Skshetuski, on account of that special brand of mead from Lubni, which we drank together in Chigrin. He has often told me about it and called him a brave knight. Well, well, I cannot get it through my head, for he has emptied many a goblet at Bohun's expense; but that he should have

bound Bohun and carried off the girl; I could not have believed him capable of such a bold deed, for I took him for a bully and a coward. He is clever but a great liar and the courage of such people consists generally in words."

"Whatever he may be it is enough that he has delivered the young princess from the hands of the bandits," said Volodiyovski, "and, as he is evidently crafty enough, he will assuredly manage to escape with her in such a manner that she shall be safe from her enemy."

"His own throat was in the balance," said Migurski.

Then they turned to Pan Skshetuski.

"Do take comfort, dear comrade."

"We will all yet be your best men."

"And get drunk at your wedding."

Zatsvilikhovski added:

"If he has fled across the Dnieper and has heard of the defeat at Korsun he must have come back to Chernigov and, in this case, we shall overtake him on the way."

"Here's to a happy ending of the sorrows and trials of our friend," cried Sleshinski.

Cheers were given for Pani Skshetuski, for the young princess, for their future descendants, and for Pan Zagloba. Thus the night passed. Early next morning, they were put under marching orders—the forces proceeded to Lubni.

They advanced quickly, for the prince's regiment was travelling without baggage. Skshetuski wanted to accompany the Tartar regiment, but he was too weak and, besides that, the prince kept him near him, for he wanted to hear about his embassy to Sich. The knight had, therefore, to give an account of his journey; of how he had been attacked at Khortyts and dragged to Sich; but he was silent about his dispute with Khmyelnitski, that he might not appear to praise himself. What chiefly disturbed the prince, was the news that old Pan Grodzitski had no power and therefore could not defend himself very long.

"That's an unspeakable misfortune," said he, "for that fortress would give the rebels a great deal of trouble; for Pan Grodzitski is a remarkable man; a real Commonwealth to the Republic. Why did he not send to me for powder? I would have given him some from the magazine in Lubni."

"He was evidently of the opinion that it was the place of Hetman W. ex. officio to think about that," said Skshetuski.

"I believe that," said the prince, and was silent.

Presently he spoke again:

"The Hetman is an old and experienced warrior, but he had too much confidence in himself and that is the reason of his downfall. He underestimated this whole rebellion and, when I hastened with troops to his assistance, he did not seem to be anxiously expecting me. He did not wish to share his glory with anyone. He was afraid that I should receive the honor of the victory."

"That is what I believe," said Skshetuski earnestly.

"He thought he could silence the Zaporojians with cudgels, and now it has happened that God has punished his pride. Through pride, which is intolerable to God himself, this Commonwealth is going to destruction, and it seems no one is free from blame...."

"The prince was right; for even he, himself, was not without blame. Not very long before this, he had marched with four thousand men to Warsaw, in consequence of a quarrel with Pan Alexander Konyetspolski about Hadziach, and had commanded his men, in case he was obliged to take the oath in the Senate chamber, to dash into the chamber and slaughter everyone; and he did this from pride; for he could not endure that he should be obliged to take an oath, and that his word alone should not be sufficient. This occurrence may have come back to his recollection at this moment, for he became plunged in thought, rode on silently and gazed at the wide steppes. Perhaps he was thinking also of the fate of the Commonwealth, which he loved with all the might of his earnest soul, and over which the day of wrath and calamity appeared to be breaking.

In the afternoon, from on the high bank of the Sula, appeared the cupolas of the churches of Lubni, the gleaming roofs and the pointed towers of St. Michael's Cathedral. The soldiers moved along slowly, and thus the time passed until evening. The prince, on his arrival, immediately went to the castle where, according to commands sent in advance, all were in readiness to march. The regiments divided up for the night and were quartered in the town. It was no easy matter, for there was an immense crowd of people in Lubni. In consequence of the reports of the spread of the peasant war on the right bank of the Dnieper, and in consequence of the excitement among the peasants, all the nobility of the other side of the Dnieper had crowded to Lubni. Even from the farthest districts, they came with wives, children, horses, camels, and whole herds of cattle. The commissioners of the Prince had

also come hither, the vice-starostas, all kind of officials, those of noble rank, farmers, Jews, in a word, all, against whom the rebels might raise their hands. It seemed as if a great fair was being held in Lubni, for the Moscow merchants and the Astrakhan Tartars were there on their way to the Ukraine with their wares, and were remaining there on account of the war. On the market-place, stood thousands of wagons, of various build, some with wheels of woven reeds, some with wheels without spokes, cut out of one piece of wood, Cossack telegas and carriages belonging to the nobility. The more distinguished guests were received in the castle, and in the inns. The others, and the servants were put up in tents in the neighborhood of the church; fires were burning everywhere in the streets in order to prepare food. Everywhere was noise and a humming, as of a beehive. The most varied costumes, the great variety of colors, the Prince's soldiers from the different companies, Haiduks, Pajuks, Jews in black cloaks, peasants, Armenians in their violet caps, and Tartars in sheepskin coats. The air was filled with many languages, cries, curses, screaming of children, barking of dogs and bellowing of cattle. This crowd of people greeted the approaching regiments with joy, for they saw in them the assurance of protection and rescue. Others hastened to the castle and screamed with all their might in honor of the prince and princess. The strangest reports were spread among the crowd: now it was that the prince would remain in Lubni; now that he was going far away, to Lithuania, whither one would be obliged to follow him; and it was even said that he had already beaten Khmyelnitski. The prince, however, after he had greeted his consort, and informed her that she must leave again the following morning, looked sadly down on that crowd of men and wagons, which would follow the army and be balls fastened to their feet, thus interfering with the speed of their march. He comforted himself with this one thought, that, beyond Brahinov where the land was peaceful, they would all scatter, seek refuge in various directions, and no longer interfere with the progress of his train. The princess herself, with her court ladies and the whole household, was to be sent to Vishniovtsa, in order that the prince might give his whole attention to the war and march into battle without any hindrance. The preparations in the castle had already been completed; the carriages were packed with belongings and treasures; provisions were gathered together;

the court was ready at any moment to mount carriages and horses. The Princess Grizelda had arranged all this before hand, for in misfortune she had as large a heart as the prince, and resembled him in energy and firmness of character. This sight comforted the prince, although his heart was torn with the thought that he must leave his beloved home in Lubni, where he had enjoyed so much happiness and won so much glory. All shared this sorrow, the army, the servants, the whole household; for all were certain that, if the prince went to fight in distant countries, the enemy would not leave Lubni untouched, but would take vengeance on these beloved walls for all the injuries which they had suffered at the hands of the prince; and so there was no lack of tears and complaints, especially among the women, and those who had been born and grown up here, and who were leaving behind them the graves of their parents.

CHAPTER VIII.

Skshetuski, who had gone ahead in his anxiety, fairly sprang into the castle in order to inquire for the princess and Zagloba, but he did not find them there. They had neither been seen nor heard of, although every one had heard of the attack on Rozloga, and the slaughter of the garrison at Vasilov. The knight shut himself up, in his quarters in the armory. Along with his blighted hopes, and sorrow, fear and anxiety took possession of him again, but he drove them away as a wounded soldier on the field of battle drives away the ravens and carrion crows who hover around him to drink his warm blood and to tear his flesh. He built upon the hope that Zagloba through craft and cunning had perhaps made his way to Chernigov, and had hidden after hearing the news of the defeat of the hetmans. He remembered just then the old beggar whom he had met on the way to Rozloga had said that he and his boy had been robbed of their clothes by some devil, and only barely escaped with his life, and had wandered about naked three days in the reeds of the Kahamlik. Suddenly, it occurred to Skshetuski that Zagloba had robbed the old man in order to provide a disguise for himself and Helena. "It cannot be otherwise!" repeated the lieutenant to himself, and he found great comfort in this thought; "for such a disguise would make it much easier to escape." He trusted, also, that God, who watches over innocence, would not forsake Helena and, in order to entreat his mercy for her without delay, he resolved to cleanse himself from his sins. He therefore left the armory and sought Father Mukhovietski. He found him speaking words of comfort to the women and begged the priest to confess him. Mukhovietski led him in to the chapel and listened to the confession. When he had finished, he gave Skshetuski a lecture, edified him, strengthened him in the faith, and comforted and then rebuked him, saying that it did not become a Christian to doubt God's power, or a citizen to weep more about his own misfortunes than about the

misfortunes of his fatherland, for it was exceptionally wrong to pity oneself more than one's fellow creatures, and to sorrow more for beloved ones than for the general unhappiness. Then he pointed out to him the misery, the degradation, and the downfall of his fatherland in such earnest and impressive words that he roused in the heart of the knight a great love for his country, in comparison with which, his own misfortunes seemed so small that he could hardly perceive them. The priest reproved him also for the anger and hatred which he entertained against the Cossacks. "You must punish them," he said, "as enemies of the faith, and of the fatherland; as allies of the Heathen; but, as your own enemies, you must forgive them, pardon them from the depths of your heart, and not revenge yourself. And if you do thus, I believe that God will comfort you and will give you back your beloved and send His peace. . . . "

Then he signed the cross above him, blessed him, and went out, commanding him, as a penance, to remain until morning on his knees before the Crucifled. The chapel was dark and empty; only two candles flickered before the altar and threw golden and red beams upon the face of the Christ, which was made of alabaster, and looked down with an expression of the deepest sweetness and suffering. Many hours passed, and the lieutenant remained motionless, as one dead. But he felt, ever more clearly, that bitterness, despair, hatred, sorrow, care, suffering were leaving his heart, were disappearing from his breast and gliding forth like serpents, to seek a hiding-place elsewhere in the darkness. He felt that he breathed more easily; that, at the same time, new light, new power were awaking in him; that his mind grew clearer; that content came to surround him—in one word before this altar, at the feet of the Crucified he found all that man in such times could find; a man of unwavering faith, without a trace or shadow of doubt.

The following morning the lieutenant was as if born again; there was much movement, many arrangements to be made; for it was the day of the departure from Lubni. The officers had to mount and muster early in the moinrng and see that men and horses were in perfect order. Then they were led out into the field and placed in marching order. The prince went to mass in St. Michael's Church; then he returned to the castle and received deputations from the Greek priests, and the citizens of Lubni and Khorol. He sat on his throne

in the hall that had been decorated by Helm, surrounded by his principal officers; and here, the burgomaster of Lubni, Hruby, in the name of all the towns that belonged to the kingdom of the Dnieper took leave of him in the language of Little Russia. First, he begged him not to go away and leave them as sheep without a shepherd, and the other deputies clasped their hands after him: "Do not go away, do not go!" And when the prince answered that it could not be otherwise, they fell at his feet and expressed their sorrow at parting from their good lord, or feigned regret; for it was said that, in spite of the prince's popularity, many of them sympathized with the Cossacks and Khmyelnitski. But the better class feared the populace, feared that directly after the departure of the prince with the army they would rise in insurrection. The prince answered, that he had always endeavored to be a father and not a master; and he conjured them to continue in their fealty to the king and to the Commonwealth, the common mother of them all, beneath whose wings they were preserved from harm, lived in peace, attained prosperity, and bore no foreign yoke, which, otherwise, their neighbors would without difficulty place on their necks. With similar words he took leave of the Greek priests, and then came the hour of departure. Then the whole castle was filled with lamentations and tears, and the noise of weeping. The young ladies of the court fainted, Panna Anna Borzobohata was restored with difficulty. The princess, alone, stepped with tearless eyes into her carriage, with her head held high; for the proud lady was ashamed to show her sorrow before the people. Round about the castle stood crowds of people, all the bells of Lubni were ringing, the priests held their crosses above the departing ones, the long train of wagons, carriages, and baggage-wagons could hardly get through the gates of the castle.

Finally, the prince mounted his horse. The flags of the regiment saluted him; upon the ramparts, shots were fired; the lamentations, the noise of the mob and loud shouts blended with the ringing of bells, with booming of cannon, with the sounds of trumpets and kettle-drums. The march began.

At the head of the column were two Tartar regiments, under Rostvorovski and Vyershul; then Pan Wurtzel's artillery, and Major Makhnitski's infantry; then followed the princess with all the ladies of her court and the whole house-

hold, in carriages; then the baggage wagons; then the Wallachian squadron under Bikhovyets and, finally, the main body of the army. The regiments of heavy cavalry, the cuirassiers, the hussars; and the train ended with the dragoons and the Semenovs.

Behind the army there came, like a serpent, an endless line of many colored carriages which carried the families of all those noblemen who did not wish to remain in the trans-Dnieper after the departure of the prince. The bugles sounded, but all hearts were oppressed; all thought at the sight of those walls, "Beloved home shall I ever see you again in this life? It is easy to set out, but difficult to return; and does not each one of us leave a part of his soul in this place, and a sweet remembrance?" So, for the last time, all eyes were turned upon the castle, upon the city, on the towers of its churches, on the cupola of the cathedral, upon the roofs of the houses. Each one knew what he was leaving behind, and knew not what was awaiting him yonder, in the blue distance towards which they were marching.

Sadness filled all hearts. The town called to the departing ones with the voices of all its bells as though it were conjuring them not to leave it, not to expose it to danger, to an unhappy fate in the future; it called after them as though, through the mournful sound of its bells, it would wish them farewell and impress itself on their memory. . . .

And so, although the train continued to advance, all heads turned back to the town and in all faces one read the question :

"Is it for the last time?"

So it was; of this whole army, of these thousands who, at this moment were marching forth with Prince Vishnyovyetski, not one, not even he, himself, should ever again see this town, or this land.

The trumpets sounded; the army moved slowly but steadily forward, and after some time, the town disappeared from their sight in a bluish mist. The houses and roofs blended in a confused mass, which gleamed in the sunlight. The prince put spurs to his horse and rode forward to a high hill, and stood there immovable, looking far into the distance. Was not this town which now gleamed in the sunlight, and this whole country which he saw from this eminence, the work of his ancestors, and of himself. It was the Vishnyovyetski's who had transformed this once barren, dismal

stretch of land into a habitable country; who had opened it up to civilized life; one might say, had created the Dnieper country out of nothing. And the prince himself had done the greater part of this work; he had built those churches, whose towers gleamed in blue and gold above the town; he had built this town, had connected it with the Ukraine by good wagon roads; he had cut down forests, drained swamps, built castles, laid out villages and settlements, attracted residents thither, destroyed the banditti, protected the people from Tartar incursions, so that the agriculturist and merchant might obtain the quiet they so much desired. He had introduced the authority of law and justice; it was through him that it had developed and flourished; it was his heart and his soul—now he must leave it all behind him. And not only on account of this immense property, which was equal in extent to all the German principalities, did the prince mourn! No, he loved this work of his own hands; he knew that if he should fail, all would miss it. The work of whole years would be destroyed with one blow; all his labor would be in vain; for the wild hordes would break their fetters and would lay villages and towns in ashes. The Tartar would again water his horses in these rivers; the primitive forest would arise from the ruins and, if God should permit him to return, he would have to begin everything all over again—and who knows if his strength would hold out; if he would yet have time, and still retain the confidence in himself which had helped him in former years. It was here that those years had been passed which for him had been a glory in the sight of men; a service to God. Now all this service and glory would vanish like smoke.

Two heavy tears rolled down his cheeks.

They were the last tears he would shed, for from henceforth only lightning would flash from those eyes. The prince's horse stretched forward his neck and neighed; and his neighing was soon answered by the other horses of the company. These sounds awakened the prince from his reverie and filled him new courage. Had he not six thousand faithful warriors, six thousand swords while the world stood before him, and which the Commonwealth was awaiting as her sole salvation. The idyll of the Trans-Dnieper is a thing of the past, but yonder, where cannons thunder, where villages and towns are in flames where are heard in the night the neighing of the Tartar horses and the Cossack yells,

mingled with the sighings of captives and the sighing of men, and women, and children; there the field of action lies open; there the glory of the saviour and father of the country is to be attained . . . Who will stretch out their hands for this laurel wreath? Who will save the deposed, humbled, dying Commonwealth, which is now trodden under the feet of the peasants, if not he—the prince; if not his army, whose weapons glitter and gleam in the sunlight below? . . .

The train was passing by the little hill on which the prince was standing and at the sight of the prince who, with his baton in his hand, stood on its summit, beneath an uplifted crucifix, one cry burst from the soldiers.

"Long live the prince! Long live our leader and Hetman, Yeremy Vishnyovyetski!" And hundreds of flags were lowered to his feet; the hussars fired off their carbines; the kettle drums rolled in answer to the shouts.

The prince drew his sword and raising it towards heaven to which he also raised his eyes, said,

"I, Yeremy Vishnyovyetski, Voyevoda of Russia, prince of Lubni and Vishniovtsa, swears to thee, Holy Trinity, and the Holy Mother of God, that as long as strength and life are in me, I will not let this sword rest which I am now raising against the knaves who have insulted our country, until I have avenged the ignominy, have cast the enemy at the feet of the Commonwealth; have brought peace to the Ukraine, and smothered in blood the rebellion of the peasants. And as I am making this vow from a pure heart, so help help me, God, Amen."

He spoke and stood there a moment longer, his eyes raised to Heaven; then he slowly rode down the hill and joined the company. The army came that night to Bazan, the village of the Countess Krinitska who received the prince, kneeling at her door, for the peasants had already besieged her in her castle and she had defended herself with the help of the servants who had remained faithful to her; when the sudden arrival of the prince saved her and her nineteen children, among whom were fourteen girls. The prince made the rebels prisoners, sent Poniatovski, the adjutant of the Cossack company, to Kanyov; and the same night he brought back five Zaporojians from the Vasyntynski's kurzen. They had all taken part in the fight at Korsun and, as they were now threatened with the rack, they gave the prince exact

details of the occurrence. They assured him also that Khmyelnitski was still in Korsun but that Tukhay Bey, with the prisoners, the booty, and the two hetmans, had gone to Chigrin whence he expected to go to the Crimea. They had also heard that Khmyelnitski had begged them very hard not to leave the Zaporojian army, but to march against the prince. The murza, however, would not agree to it and said that after the destruction of the armies and the hetmans the Cossacks might look out for themselves; but he was not going to stay any longer, for the prisoners would die. When they were asked about Khmyelnitski's fighting strength, they gave it at two hundred thousand fighting men, the greater part of them unreliable; and only fifty thousand good fighting troops, that is Zaporojians and Cossacks from the estates or from the towns, who had joined the rebellion.

On hearing this news, the prince's courage rose, for he hoped when he reached the other side of the Dnieper to increase his forces considerably by fugitives from the royal army and soldiers from the estates.

The following morning he continued his journey.

Beyond Pereyaslav the army came to gigantic, gloomy forests which stretched along the shore of the river, the Trubiej, as far as Kozielts and even to Chernigov. It was towards the end of May. The heat was frightful. In the forests, where they expected it would be a little cooler, it was so oppressive that men and horses could hardly stand. The cattle that they took with them fell down or ran whereever there was any water as if they were mad, overturned the wagons and created a great deal of confusion. Horses began to fall down, especially in the heavy cavalry; the nights were unbearable on account of the enormous quantity of insects and the oppressively strong smell of the pine gum which, on account of the heat, exuded from the trees in larger quantities than usual.

Thus four days passed. On the fifth day, the heat became unnatural. By nightfall, the horses began to snort, and the cattle to bellow piteously, as though they saw some danger ahead which the men could not yet perceive.

"They smell blood," was whispered about in the baggage-wagons, among the swarms of fugitive noble families.

"The Cossacks are following us, there will be a battle."

At these words, the women began to scream piteously; the noise reached the servants; confusion and terror ensued. The

wagons tried to get ahead of each other or left the highway and drove blindly into the forests where they got fixed between the trees.

But the prince sent some men over and order was soon restored. Scouts were sent out in all directions to discover whether danger really threatened. Skshetuski, who had gone with the Wallachs, as a volunteer, was the first to return in the morning, and immediately went to the prince.

"Well, how do things stand?" asked Yeremy.

"My Prince, the forests are in flames.

"Were they set on fire?"

"Yes, I caught some men who say that Khymelnitski sent out some volunteers to follow you and to set fire to the woods when the wind was favorable.

"He wants to burn us alive, without a battle! Bring the men here."

They were at once brought forward, three herders, wild, stupid, terrified men who acknowledged at once that they had been commanded to set fire to the forests. They confessed also that an army was following the prince and was going by another road to Chernigov nearer the Dnieper.

Meanwhile other scouts came back and all brought the same news.

"The woods are on fire!"

But the prince did not seem to be uneasy on that account.

"That is the way of the Heathen," he said, "but that does not matter. The fire will not cross the rivers that flow into the Trubiej."

In fact so many little rivers flowed into the Trubiej, along which the army was marching towards the north, forming here and there broad marshes that there was no danger that the fire would cross them; it would be necessary to set fire afresh to the woods beyond each river.

The scouts soon gave notice that this was being done. They daily brought in incendiaries, who were strung up on pines along the way.

The fire spread rapidly along the rivers to the east and west, but not towards the north. At night a red glow illumined the sky. The woman sang hymns from morning till night. The terrified wild animals fled out of the burning forest upon the road and joined themselves to the train, mingling with the herds of domestic cattle. The wind blew the smoke so that the whole horizon was covered. The army

and the wagons moved along in a thick cloud that no eye could pierce. One could hardly breathe. The smoke blinded all eyes and the wind drove it ever in denser masses. The sunlight could hardly penetrate these clouds of smoke, and in the night it was lighter than in the day because the fires lighted up the scene. The forests seemed to be interminable.

Through these burning woods and clouds of smoke, Yeremy led his army; and then came the news that the enemy was marching on the other side of Trubiej but it was not known how great a force it was—Vyershul's Tartars maintained firmly that they were still a long way off.

One night, Captain Sukhodolsk from Bodenek came to the camp from the other side of Desna. He had formerly been in the prince's service and, only a few years before, had moved into the country. He too had fled from the peasants but he brought tidings which they had not yet heard. A great confusion arose when, on the prince's asking for news, he answered:

"It is a bad lookout, my Prince! You have heard of the defeat of the hetmans and also of the death of the King?"

The Prince, who was sitting upon a little camp stool before his tent, sprang up in terror.

"The King is dead?"

"His Gracious Majesty breathed his last in Meteth a week before the defeat at Korsun," said Sukhodolsk.

"God in his mercy has not allowed him to live to see this day," answered the prince, then he put both hands to his head and continued: "Terrible times have come to this republic! Elections and interregnum; discords and plotting by foes on the outside; now when the whole people should be blended into a single sword held by one hand. God has turned his face away from us, and in his anger, will punish us for our sins. King Vladislav, alone could extinguish the torch of this war, for the Cossacks loved him with an extraordinary love and, besides this, he was a valiant warrior."

At this moment several officers stepped up to the prince, among them Zatsvilikhovski, Skshetuski, Baranovski, Wurtzel, Maknitski and Polanovski and the prince said:

"Gentlemen, the king is dead!"

As at the word of command, all heads were uncovered, all faces became solemn. This unexpected news made everyone speechless. It was not for some moments that the universal sorrow found expression.

"Grant him, Lord, Thy everlasting peace," said the prince.

"And may perpetual light shine upon him!"

Presently Father Mukhovietski chanted the *Dies-Irae* and, surrounded by the increasing clouds of smoke in the forests an unspeakable depression filled all hearts and souls.

It seemed to all as if they were entirely alone in the world in presence of the threatening enemy . . . and had no one left but their prince.

And all eyes turned to him, and a new bond of affection was riveted between him and his army.

The same evening the prince said to Zatsvilikhovski so that every one could hear him: "We need a warlike king, therefore if God permits us to make a choice, may we have Prince Charles, who has a more warlike spirit than Casimir."

"Vivat, Carolus rex," cried the officers.

"Vivat," repeated the hussars, and with them, the whole army.

And the Voyevoda certainly did not dream that this shout which sounded in the Trans-Dnieper should penetrate the desert forests of Chernigov, even to Warsaw, and should take from his hands the baton of the Chief Hetman of the Crown.

CHAPTER IX.

After nine days' march, of which Mashkyevich became the Xenophon, and a three days' passage of the Desna the army finally arrived at Chernigov. Skshetuski went ahead with the Wallachs. The prince had purposely commanded him to ride forward and garrison the town, in order that he might be able to get the earliest information about the princess and Zagloba. But here, as in Lubni, no one either in the town or the castle had heard anything about them. They had vanished like a stone in the water, and the knight himself did not know what to think about it. Where could they have sought refuge? Surely not in Moscow nor in the Crimea nor in Sich! There remained only one conclusion, that they might have crossed the Dnieper and, in this case, they would find themselves right in the midst of the insurrection. There were slaughter, incendiary fires, swarms of drunken blacks, Zaporojians, and Tartars, against which Helena's disguise would prove no protection; for the Heathen eagerly took boys captive, on account of the high price that they could obtain for them in the markets of Stambul. The dreadful suspicion even occurred to Skshetuski, that Zagloba might have intentionally led her to that side of the river in order to sell her to Tukhay Bey, who would reward him more handsomely than Bohun—and this thought almost drove him mad. But Pan Longin Podbipyenta calmed him effectually in this regard. He had known Zagloba longer than Skshetuski had.

"Dear little brother, Lieutenant," said he, "put that idea out of your head. The nobleman certainly has not done that. At the Kurtseviches' house, there were treasures enough that Bohun would willingly have given him if he wished to ruin the girl. He would not need to place his life in jeopardy, and could gain riches."

"Quite true," said the lieutenant, "but why did he fly across the Dnieper, and not to Lubni or Chernigov."

"Calm yourself, my dear little fellow, I know this Zagloba. He has drunk with me and is my debtor. Money is no con-

sideration with him, either his own or anyone's else. When he has any of his own, he squanders it—other people's money he does not pay back; but, that he could commit such a deed, I will never believe."

"He is a trifling man," said Skshetuski.

"Yes, trifling he may be, and a scamp who likes to lead others upon smooth ice but manages to extricate himself from all difficulties. But, as the priest with prophetic spirit has foretold that God will bring her back to you, it will come to pass; for it is only just that every honest love should be rewarded, and with this assurance I comfort you, as I comfort myself."

Here Longin began to sigh heavily and added, after a pause:

"Let us inquire about them in the castle, perhaps they have passed through here."

They inquired everywhere, but in vain; nowhere could they find even a trace that the fugitives had passed through the town. The castle was full of noblemen with their wives and children, whom they had shut up here to protect them from the Cossacks. The prince advised them to go with him and warned them that the Cossacks were following his tracks. They had not dared to attack the army, but it was most probable that after the departure of the prince they would fall upon the town and castle. The nobility in the castle were however strangely blinded.

"Here, behind the forests, we are certainly safe," they answered the prince, "no one will come to us here."

"Did not I come through these forests?" said the prince.

"Your Highness came through, certainly, but the people cannot come through, Ha! not forests like these!"

And so they would not accompany the prince but remained, in their blindness, for which they paid dearly later on; for immediately after the prince had left, the Cossacks arrived. The castle was defended bravely for three weeks. Then it fell and all who were in it were slain to the last man. The Cossacks committed frightful cruelties; tore the children to pieces; roasted the women at slow fire—and no one took vengeance on them for these deeds.

The prince, meanwhile, had reached Lebetch on the Dnieper, and let his army rest there, while he and his household and the baggage-wagons proceeded to Brahina, that lay in the midst of forests and impassable swamps. A week later,

the army crossed the river. Then they went to Babits, near Mozyr and there, on Corpus Christi Day, the hour of separation came; for the princess with her household was to go to her aunt the Voyevodina of Willna at Turova, while the prince with his army was to go forth to battle in the Ukraine.

At the last parting meal, the prince and the princess, the court ladies and the highest nobility were assembled; but in the ranks of the young court ladies and the cavaliers one missed the usual gaiety; for many a soldier's heart bled at the thought that from this hour he would be obliged to leave his beloved, for whom he would willingly have lived, fought, and died. Many blue and black eyes among the fair girls wept tears of sorrow that a soldier lover must march amid bullets and swords, amid Cossacks and wild Tartars . . . and perhaps never return.

Therefore, when the prince gave the word to take leave of his consort and of the household, the young ladies wailed bitterly, one and all like kittens. The officers, however, with a show of courage, rose from their seats, grasped their swords and cried together:

"We will conquer and come back."

"May God help you," answered the princess.

Thereupon arose a cheer that made walls and windows rattle.

"Long live the princess! Long live our mother and benefactress!"

"Long may she live! Long may she live!"

The soldiers loved her on account of her kindness to the officers, on account of her great heart, her generosity and her gentleness, and on account of her care for their families.

Prince Yeremy loved her above everything; for these two natures were made for one another, and resembled one another like two goblets moulded of gold and iron. Each officer stepped up to her, knelt before her chair with his goblet in his hand, and she took each head between her hands and spoke kind words to each separately. To Skshetuski she said:

"Many a knight will now receive a scapulary or a ribbon as a parting gift; and, as she from whom you earnestly desire a remembrance is not here, take one from me as from your mother."

She took off a golden cross of Turkish workmanship and hung it round the knight's neck, and he kissed her hands respectfully. The prince was evidently much pleased at this

for he had latterly grown very fond of Skshetuski, because he had maintained the dignity of the prince during the embassy to Sich and had refused to take letters from Khmyelnitski. They arose from the table, and the young ladies, who had quickly caught up the princess's remarks and considered them as a permission, began at once to take off, one, a scapula, another a scarf, another a little cross; and when the knights saw this, they stepped up, each to his own favorite, even if not his betrothed; yet to the one whom he liked best; Poniovoski to Countess Jytynska, Bikhovyets to Countess Bohviynianke who he had fallen in love with lately, Rostvorovski to Zuckovna, the red-haired Vyershul to Skopaka, Makhnitski, who was no longer young, to Zavieyska. Anusia Borzobahata, only, although she was the handsomest of all, stood neglected and alone at the window. Her face was covered with blushes; her little eyes looked down under her drooping lashes, half angry, half entreating that they might not affront her thus. Then the traitor Volodiyovski approached her and said:

"I should also like, Panna Anusia, to beg you for a souvenir; but I hesitated to express my wish, because I thought that there would be such a crowd around you that I should not be able to approach you."

Anusia's cheeks burned still hotter, but she answered without a moment's hesitation:

"You want a souvenir from other hands than mine, but you will not get it, for if it is not too crowded for you yonder, it is too high."

The shot was well aimed and found its mark, for, in the first place it contained an allusion to the short stature of the knight, and, secondly, to his love for Princess Barbara Zbaraska. Pan Volodiovsky had first fallen in love with the older sister, Anna, and, when she became engaged, he had choked down his sorrow and silently given his heart to Barbara, believing that no one had remarked this transfer of affection. Consequently, when he heard Anusia's words, although at other times he was ready with his words as with his sword, and was a knight without fear and without reproach, he became so confused that he could not answer, and he only stuttered:

"And you, too, lady, are aiming very high, just as high as the head of Pan Podbipyenta."

"He truly surpasses you in the sword as in politeness,"

answered the cool-headed girl, "I thank you that you reminded me of him. That was right!"

Then she turned to the Lithuanian:

"Come nearer, sir; I also want my knight and I do not know that I could hang this scarf across a more manly breast."

Pan Podbipyenta opened his eyes as if he did not dare believe what he had heard; then he fell on his knees so that the floor creaked.

"My benefactress, my benefactress!"

Anna threw her scarf around him and her little hand disappeared completely beneath the fair moustache of Pan Longin, and only a smack and a murmur were audible.

Volodiyovski hearing the sound said to Lieutenant Migurski:

"One would swear that the bear had frightened away the bees and was eating the honey."

Then he went off in a rage, for he felt the sting of her remarks, for, in his time, he had also loved Anna.

The prince had already taken leave of the princess, and an hour later the household was on its way to Torova; the prince advancing to Pripets. During the night, at the crossing of the river while they were building the floats for the cannon and the hussars were overseeing the work, Longin said to Skshetuski:

"That means misfortune, little brother."

"What has happened?" asked the lieutenant.

"News from the Ukraine."

"What?"

"Zaporojians have told me that Tukhay Bey has gone with the hordes to the Crimea."

"Well, what does that matter, you will not cry about that?"

"Why, little brother, you told me yourself—and you were right, were you not, that I could not count Cossack heads and if the Tartars have gone away, where shall I get my three heathen heads, where shall I look for them? Ah! And I need them so much?"

Skshetuski, although he was very sad, smiled and answered:

"I can guess why you are so anxious, for I saw to-day that some one had chosen you for her knight."

Thereupon Longin folded his hands.

"Yes, why should I hide it any longer? I am in love, little brother, I am in love. Ah! what a misfortune it is."

"Do not worry, I do not believe that Tukhay Bey has gone

away, and, besides, you will come across more Heathens than there are mosquitoes here above our heads."

Regular clouds of mosquitoes swarmed above the horses and men, for the army was in the country of impassable morasses, of marshy forests, swampy meadows, rivers, rivulets, and brooks; in that dreary, uninhabited land that formed an impenetrable wilderness, of whose inhabitants one sang in those times:

"The Lord of Have Nothing Gave with his little daughter,
Two kegs of axle-pitch and a mushroom wreath,
A pot of eels: And a piece of swamp besides.

On these swamps grew not only mushrooms, but also, in spite of the song, great lordly fortunes. But the prince's soldiers who for the most part had been born and had grown up in the high, dry steppes on the other side of the Dnieper, could hardly believe their eyes, for although there one could find marshes and forests in places, here the whole country seemed to be one swamp. The night was bright and clear, and as far as the eye could reach, scarcely six feet of dry earth was to be seen beneath the moonlight. Little mounds only raised their heads above the water. The forests seemed to grow out of the waves; water bespattered the feet of the horses; water was squeezed out of the ground by the wheels of the cannon. Wurtzel was in despair.

"A remarkable march," he said. "At Chernigov we were threatened with fire; here we are drowning in water."

The earth, in fact, offered no support to the feet. It seemed to give and tremble as if it would open and swallow up those who moved on its surface. In four days, the army had reached Pripets and from that out they crossed almost daily rivulets and brooks that intersected the swampy ground, and nowhere was a bridge to be found. The whole army had to be transported in boats and barges. In a few days fogs and torrents of rain began. The soldiers gathered together their last strength to try and get out of this accursed country and the prince urged and hurried them on. He had whole woods chopped down and roads made from the round trunks of trees; he himself rode ahead of the whole train. When the soldiers saw that he did not spare his own strength, that from morning until late at night he sat upon his horse, led the army, led the march, and directed everything himself, they dared not murmur; although the labor was almost beyond their strength. To remain from morning till late at

"MY BENEFACTRESS, MY BENEFACTRESS!"

With Fire and Sword.

night in the swamp and dampness was the common fate of all. The horses' hoofs began to soften and peel off; many sank down before the cannons they were drawing, so that the foot soldiers and Volodiyovski's dragoons had to drag the cannon. The aristocratic regiments, such as Skshetuski's hussars, Zatsvilikhovski's company and the Cuirassiers seized axes in order to build roads. This was a famous march, amid cold, water and deprivations; in which the will of the leader and the zeal of the soldiers overcame all obstacles. No one had hitherto dared to march along this road with an army in the spring of the year, when all rivers overflowed their banks. Fortunately, the march was not once interrupted by an attack. The people in this region were quiet and peaceful and had no idea of rebelling and even, later on, when they had been aroused by the Cossacks and excited by their example, they would not join their regiments. Even now they looked with dreamy eyes at the passing army of knights, who arose as if by magic from the woods and marshes, and glided by like shadows. They furnished guides and performed in silence all that was demanded of them.

When the prince saw this, he restrained with a firm hand any breach of order among the soldiery, so that the army should not have behind them sighs, curses, and complaints; and when, after the army had passed through some smoky village, a report was spread that Prince Yeremy had gone by the people would shake their heads and say softly to one another:

"He is good!"

Finally, after twenty days of superhuman exertion and fatigues, the prince's army reached the rebel country. "Yeremy is coming! Yeremy is coming!" resounded through the whole Ukraine and far away beyond the Wild Lands, to Chigrin and Yagorlik, "Yeremy is coming!" resounded through towns, villages, hamlets and farms, and, at this news, the scythes, hay-forks and knives fell from the hands of the peasants; faces grew pale, undisciplined bands crept away at night towards the south, like packs of wolves at the sound of the huntsman's horn. The Tartar who was plundering on the highway, sprang from his horse and laid his ear close to the ground to listen. In the castles and smalled fortified towns that had not yet been taken, the bells were rung and the Te Deum Laudamus sung.

And the terrible lion lay down on the threshold of a rebellious land and rested. He was gathering strength.

CHAPTER X.

Khmyelnitski meanwhile remained for some time in Korsun; then he went back to Byalocerk and took up his residence there. The horde struck camp on the other side of the river and spread their forces out over the Voyevoda of Kiev. Longin Podbipyenta had worried himself unnecessarily about the lack of Tartar heads, and Skshetuski had rightly prophesied that the Zaporojians, whom Poniatovski had taken near Kaniov, had spread a false report. Tukhay Bey had not left. He had not even gone to Chigrin. Yet, from all sides fresh Tartars arrived. The petty princes, of Azov and Astrakhan, who had never before been in Poland had come with four thousand warriors, twelve thousand of the Nohayski horde, twenty thousand from Byalogrod and Budziak, all of them in former times sworn enemies of the Zaporojians and of the Cossacks; to-day their brothers and their allies in a war against Christianity. Finally, the Khan Islam Girey himself came with twelve thousand from Perekop. The whole Ukraine suffered from these hordes; not only the nobility, but all the people of Russia whose villages they burned, and whom they had robbed of wealth and property. Even the peasants, themselves, with wives and children, were led into captivity. In these times of violence, arson and bloodshed, there was only one salvation for the peasant; to flee into Khmyelnitski's camp. There he was transformed from the victim to the oppressor and destroyed his own land, but he was at least sure of his life. Unhappy land! When the insurrection broke out, Nicholas Pototski first devastated it and punished it; then the Zaporojians and the Tartars, who, it was said, had come to save it. And now, Yeremy Vishnyovyetski hung threateningly over it.

Therefore, all who could fled into Khmyelnitski's camp; even the nobility, as there seemed no other way of escape. Thanks to this circumstance, Khmyelnitski's forces increased mightily and, if he did not penetrate into the heart of the Commonwealth; if he remained some time in Byalocerk, it

was because he wished to bring these wild unbridled elements into some kind of order.

In his iron hands, they were soon transformed into a warlike force. Squadrons of tried Zaporojians were ready; the "blacks" were divided into regiments; Colonels chosen from among the former atamans; certain divisions were sent out to attack the castle, in order to train them for war. They were by nature a warlike people, apt at war as were no other people, used to weapons, acquainted with fire and with the bloody front of battle, through the invasions of the Tartars.

Two colonels, Handja and Ostap, advanced on Nestervar. They captured it and killed the inhabitants, Jews and nobles, to the last man. They killed Prince Chetvertinski's own miller on the threshold of the gate of the castle, cutting his head off. The princess became Ostap's personal slave. Others moved in a different direction and success accompanied their arms, and fear had deprived the Poles of courage—fear "to which this people were unaccustomed," which took their weapons from their hands and paralyzed their strength.

His officers often said to Khmyelnitski:

"Why do you not march towards Warsaw, instead of staying here, consulting the fortune-tellers, filling yourself with brandy and allowing the Poles time to recover and gather their forces."

Frequently during the night, the drunken crowd would shout and besiege Khmyelnitski's quarters and demand that he should lead them against the Poles. Khmyelnitski had fanned the flame of the rebellion, had lent it enormous strength; but now he began to recognize that that strength was pushing him forward into an unknown future. Therefore he often gazed with clouded eyes into that future and sought to penetrate its secret and his heart was disturbed.

As has already been said, he, alone, of all the commanders and atamans knew what an immense strength lay hidden in the apparent torpor of the Commonwealth. He had called the rebellion to life; he had conquered at the Zolta Woda, he had conquered at Korsun, he had destroyed the royal forces; but what now?

He therefore summoned all his officers to a council; let his blood-shot eyes, beneath which all trembled, wander round the circle, and gloomily put this question to them:

"What's the next thing ? What do you want to do?" To go to Warsaw? Then Prince Vishnyovyetski will come here;

strike down your wives and children like lightning, and leave behind him nothing but earth and water. Then he will follow us to Warsaw with the whole might of the nobility, who will unite with him, and thus, between two fires, we shall find our death; if not in battle, on stakes. . . . We cannot rely on the friendship of the Tartars; to-day they are with us; to-morrow they may turn against us and return to the Crimea, or sell us to the lords.

"So what is to be done? Speak! March against Vishnyovyetski. Then he will detain us and all the Tartar hordes and, during this time, the forces will be organized and fly to help him from the heart of the Commonwealth. Choose! . . . "

The terrified colonels were silent and Khmyelnitski continued:

"Why have you lost your courage? Why do you no longer insist on going to Warsaw? If you do not know what to do, leave it to me and, with God's help, I will save my life and your own, and provide satisfaction for the Zaporojian army and for all the Cossacks."

There remained only one way open. To enter into negotiations. Khmyelnitski knew very well how much might be done with the Commonwealth in this manner. He calculated that the Diet would rather agree to pay a considerable indemnity than to levy taxes for a war which would be long and troublesome. He knew, finally, that there was a powerful party in Warsaw, at the head of which stood the king himself—the news of his death had not yet reached Khmyelnitski—the chancellor and many men, who would willingly do anything to oppose the power of the gigantic estates in the Ukraine, who would form an alliance with the Cossacks to strengthen the hands of the king, conclude peace with them forever more and lead the assembled thousands to a war against the foreigner. Under such circumstances Khmyelnitski might expect a very high position for himself, might receive the hetman's staff from the hands of the King and might demand priceless concessions for the Cossacks. That was why he remained in Byalocerk. He was arming, sending manifestos out in all directions; was gathering the people together; forming armies, and getting possession of the castles, for he knew that they would only negotiate with one who was powerful; but he did not penetrate into the heart of the Commonwealth.

Oh, if he could only, by means of negotiations, conclude

a peace! Then the sword would be wrenched from Vishnyovyetski's hand, or, if the prince would not lay down his sword, it would not be Khmyelnitski but he, who would be the rebel; who would be carrying on war, contrary to the will of the king and the Diet.

Then he would march against Vishnyovyetski, but as an envoy of the King and of the Commonwealth; and then the last hour would have come, not for the prince alone but for all the kinglets of the Ukraine with their possessions and their estates.

These were the thoughts of the Zaporojian ataman. This was the structure he had erected, but, upon the pillars that held up the edifice, care, doubt, fear often rested—like birds of ill-omen and croaked forebodingly of evil.

Would the party of peace in Warsaw be quite strong enough? Would it enter into negotiations with him. What would the Diet and the Senate say? Would they stop their ears to the groans and cries for help from the Ukraine? Would they close their eyes to the flames?

Would not the influence of those lords who owned the immense estates be greater especially as the maintenance of these estates would now be called in question? And was this Commonwealth already so terrorized that she would forgive him his alliance with the Tartars?

On the other hand, Khmyelnitski's soul was filled with doubt, lest the rebellion might have attained too mighty proportions.

Would the wild masses ever be brought within the bounds of order? He, Khmyelnitski, might conclude a peace; but the populace in his name would continue their murder and rapine, or perhaps take vengeance on his own head for their blasted hopes. It was truly a swollen torrent, a sea, a hurricane! Terrible situation! If the insurrection were weaker, they would treat it as of little moment and would not negotiate; but, as it was powerful, the negotiations might be thwarted by the force of circumstances.

What would happen then?

When such thoughts oppressed the hetman's mind, he shut himself up in his room and drank for days and nights. Then the report would spread among the colonels and "blacks," "Khmyelnitski is drinking," and, following his example, they all drank. They gave themselves over to debauchery. The prisoners were murdered, they fought one

another and plundered the people. The Day of Judgment appeared to have come; the reign of terror and monstrosity. Byalocerk was transformed into a living Hell.

One day, the nobleman Vyhovski called to see the drunken hetman; he had been taken prisoner at Korsun and had been made the hetman's secretary. He stepped into the room and, without ceremony, began to shake the drunken man; took him by his arms, sat him down on a bench, and shook him again.

"What the devil is it?" asked Khmyelnitski.

"Get up hetman, come to yourself," answered Vyhovski. "An envoy has come."

Khmyelnitski sprang to his feet and recovered himself at once.

"Hey!" he cried to the Cossack boy who was sitting on the threshold, "my cap, and my baton."

Then he said to Vyhovski:

"Who has come? From whom?"

"The priest, Patronius Lasko of Hushchy, from the Voyevoda of Bratslav."

"From Pan Kisiel?"

"The same!"

"Praise be to the Father and the Son, praise be to the Holy Ghost and the Holy Virgin," he said crossing himself. And his face became brighter and more cheerful.

They wanted to open negotiations with him.

But the same day came reports that contradicted completely the messages of peace from Pan Kisiel.

It was announced that the prince, wearied by his march through forests and swamps, had rested his forces, and had then penetrated into the rebel country, which he was burning; and was killing all that came in his way. That an advance guard, that had preceded him, under Skshetsuki, had slaughtered a band of Cossacks and "blacks" consisting of two thousand men and had destroyed them all, to the very last man; and the prince himself had stormed Pohrebyshch, the estate of the prince Zbaraski, and has left nothing behind him but land and water. Dreadful things were related of the storming and capture of Pohrebyshch, for it was the nest of the most obstinate rebels. It was related that the prince had said to his soldiers, "Kill them so that they will feel that they are dying." And the soldiers committed the most frightful cruelties. Not a living soul escaped from the town. Seven hundred prisoners were hanged and two hundred impaled.

They said also that many had had their eyes bored out; others had been roasted at a slow fire. In a word, in that whole region, the rebellion had been absolutely crushed. The inhabitants either fled to Khmyelnitski or received the Lord of Lubni upon their knees with bread and salt, and wept to excite compassion. The smaller bands were all destroyed and, as the fugitives from Samhovodka Spichyn, Ploskova and Vakhnovki maintained there was not a single tree in the forests from which a Cossack did not hang. And all this had happened in the immediate neighborhood of Byalocerk and of the hundreds of thousands of Khmyelnitski's army.

When Khmyelnitski heard of it, he bellowed like a wounded auroch. On one side, negotiations, on the other, the sword. If he should march against the Prince, it would be a sign that he did not wish to enter into the negotiations which the Count of Brusilov proposed to him.

His only hope was in the Tartars. He sprang up and hastened into Tukhay Bey's quarters.

"My friend," said he, after he had made the customary salaam, "as you saved me at the Zolta Woda and at Korsun, so save me now. An envoy has come from the Voyevoda of Bratslav with a letter, in which he promises me satisfaction and to the Zaporojians the restoration of their old privileges, on the one condition, that I make an end of the war. And I must do it, if I wish to show my good intentions. Meanwhile, here are rumors that my enemy, the Prince Vishnyovyetski, has destroyed Pohrebyshch, root and branch; that he is cutting down my good Cossacks; impaling them and boring out their eyes. And, as I am not able to march against him, I have come to you with the request that you will advance with your Tartars against my enemy, and yours. If you do not do it, it will not be long before he attacks our camp."

The Murza, who was sitting on a pile of rugs that had been stolen in Korsun, or carried away from the houses of the nobles, rocked himself backwards and forwards, closed his eyelids, as if for more careful thought, and finally answered:

"Allah! I cannot do it."

"Why?" asked Khmyelnitski.

"Because I have already lost enough eys and men on your account, at Zolta Woda and at Korsun. Why should I sacrifice any more of them? Yeremy is a great warrior. I will march against him, if you will come with me, but not alone. I am no fool to lose all that I have heretofore won, in a single

battle. I would rather send the Chambuls out after booty and prisoners, I have already done enough for you unbelieving dogs. I will not go myself and will dissuade the Khan. I have said it."

"You swore that you would help me!"

"So I did, but I swore to fight together with you, not instead of you. Take yourself off!"

"I allowed you to take captives from among my people. I have given up my booty to you; given up the hetmans to you."

"If you had not given them up, I would have given you up to them."

"I will go to the Khan."

"Go away, fool, I tell you."

And the Murza's pointed teeth showed between his lips. Khmyelnitski saw that it was dangerous to persist any longer. He rose, therefore, and really went to the Khan.

But from the Khan he received the same answer. The Tartars had their own ideas, and were seeking their own advantage. Instead of fighting a decisive battle with a leader who was considered unconquerable, they preferred to distribute their forces through the country and to enrich themselves without shedding blood. Raging with anger, Khmyelnitski returned to his quarters and, in his despair, stretched out his hand for the bottle; but Vyhovski snatched the bottle away.

"You shall not drink, hetman, the envoy is waiting. He must be dealt with."

Khmyelnitski flew into a violent rage.

"I will have you and the envoy both impaled!"

"And I will not give you the gorzalka. Is it not a disgrace for you, whom fate has raised to such an eminence, to fill yourself with vodka like a common Cossack? Fie! Fie! Sir Hetman, you must not do it. The rumor of the arrival of the envoy has already gone abroad. The army and colonels are waiting for a council. Now is no time for drinking; but you just hammer the iron while it is hot—for now you may conclude peace and demand all that you wish; for let the opportunity pass, and it will be too late for your head and mine are in the balance . . . . you must send an ambassador immediately to Warsaw and sue the king for peace."

"You have a good head," said Khmyelnitski, "let the bells ring to call the council; and say to the colonels on the square that I am coming immediately."

Vyhovski went out and, immediately afterwards, the council bells sounded, at whose voice the Zaporojians at once began to assemble. The commanders and colonels took their places. The terrible Kshyvonos, Khmyelnitski's righthand, Kshechovski the sword of the Cossacks, the old and experienced Dziedzial, Colonel Kropivnitski, Fedor Loboda of Pereyaslav, the terrible Fedorenko, the wild Pushkavenko of Poltova who commanded only Chabans, Shumeyko from Nish, the fiery Charnota from Hadziats, Yakubovich from Chigrin besides Nosach, Hladki, Adamovich, Glukh, Pulyay, Panich—not all of them, for some were on the road and many of them in the other world whither Prince Yeremy had despatched them.

The Tartars were not invited to the council this time. The common people collected near by on the square; the thronging crowd were driven away with sticks and straps and some were killed. At length Khmyelnitski appeared, clothed in red, his cap on his head, his baton in his hand. Beside him walked the reverend priest, Patronius Lasko, white like a dove; and on the other side Vyhovski with papers in his hand.

Khmyelnitski sat down among the officers and remained for a time in silence. Then he removed his cap as a sign that the council was opened, stood up and began to speak.

"Gentlemen, officers, and atamans, it is well known to you that, on account of the great and undeserved wrongs we have suffered, we have been obliged to take up arms; and, with the assistance of the illustrious Czar of the Crimea, have demanded from the lords the reinstatement of the old rights and privileges that have been taken from us, without the consent of his Majesty, the King; and God has blessed our undertakings, has sent a terror upon our dishonorable tyrants, such as they have never before known, and has in this manner, punished their oppression and their breach of faith. But he has rewarded us with great victories, for which we are bound to praise him with a grateful heart. As their pride has now been punished, it becomes us to reflect, that henceforth, no more Christian blood should flow, as God, in his mercy, and as our holy faith commands. But we cannot lay down the sword until our old rights and privileges are given back to us, with the consent of the all powerful king. The Voyevoda of Bratslav writes to me now that such an event is probable and I agree with him, for it is not we, but the lords; the Pototskis, the Kalinovskis, the Vishnyovyetskis, and the Konietspolskis who have forfeited their allegiance to the king

and to the Commonwealth. As we have punished them, we deserve a just compensation and reward from his Majesty and the States. Therefore I request you, worthy comrades, and friends, to read the letter of the Voyevoda of Bratslav, which he has sent me through Father Patronius Lasko, a nobleman of our ancient faith, and to determine wisely that the shedding of blood in Christian countries shall come to an end, and that we should receive indemnity and reward for the fealty and obedience which we have shown to the Commonwealth."

Khmyelnitski did not ask if an end should be put to the war. He demanded a decision, that it should be so. Consequently a murmur of disapproval arose from some, which presently broke into threatening shouts, led, especially, by Charnota of Hadziats.

Khmyelnitski spoke not a word. He only looked carefully in the direction whence the protests came and wrote down the names of his opposers in his memory. Meanwhile, Vyhovski stood up, holding the letter from Kisiel in his hand. Zorko held up a copy of the letter in the air to read it out to the council. Outside, as well as in the room, there was a deep silence.

The Voyevoda began his letter in these words:

"Worthy Commander of the Zaporojian army of the Commonwealth. My old friend and comrade:

"Although there are many who take you for an enemy of the Commonwealth, I am not only convinced of your faithful attachment to it, but I am also endeavoring to convince the Senators, my colleagues, of the same. There are three things that convince me of this: First, because the army of the Dnieper, although from time immemorial it has sought glory and maintained its freedom, has always remained faithful to the king, to the lords and to the Commonwealth. Secondly, that our people of Russia are so firm in their faith that any one of us would rather give up his life than yield one jot of his faith. And thirdly, when, and more's the pity, as has now happened that blood has been shed in a fraternal strife, we still have a common country, in which we came into the world, in which we enjoy our freedom; and there is not in the whole world another kingdom and another country that possesses such laws and such privileges as ours. Therefore we are all striving to guard the crown of this, our mother; if there is evil, and it cannot be avoided, reason teaches us that it is easier in a free State to adjust all wrongs than, after the

loss of such a mother to find another like her in Christendom, or in Pagan countries."

Loboda of Pereyaslav interrupted the reader:

"He speaks the truth," he said in a loud voice.

"He speaks the truth," repeated the other colonels.

"It is not true! He lies, dog-believer, "cried Charnota.

"Silence, silence! you are yourself a dog-believer."

"You traitors, to death with you!"

"To death with yourself!"

"Silence, read on! Read! He is our man. Listen, listen!"

The storm was about to break in earnest, but Vyhovski continued to read and all was quiet again.

The Voyevoda went on to say that "the Zaporojian army must have confidence in him, for it knew well that he, being of the same blood and faith, would be their friend. He reminded them that in the unfortunate slaughter at Kumeykan and Startsa he had taken no part. Then he demanded of Khmyelnitski to put an end to the war, to send away the Tartars or to turn his arms against them, and to confirm himself in his fealty to the Commonwealth. He closed his letter with the following words:

"I promise you that, as true as I am a son of the Church of God, and as true as my race springs from the people of Russia, I will assist you to do all that is right. You know very well that in this Commonwealth my word (through God's Grace) is worth something, and that, without me, no war can be declared nor peace be concluded. I am first opposed to the civil war, etc." . . . .

There at once rose voices for and against; but, taken all together the letter pleased the officers and even the common people. Nevertheless, in the first few moments, one could understand nothing. One could hardly hear a word, on account of the violence with which the dispute raged about the letter. The common people from a distance seemed like a huge whirlpool, in which swarms of men moved back and forth, fermenting and seething. The colonels shook their plumes and sprang towards one another with threatening fists. With angry faces, flashing eyes, and foaming lips, they glared at one another. The partisans of war were led by Erasmus Charnota, who had become perfectly mad with rage. Khmyelnitski himself, seeing it was on the verge of an outbreak and, when such an outbreak took place, all voices were hushed, as at the roaring of a lion but, before this happened, Kshe-

chovski had sprang upon a bench, waved his bunch of plumes and roared with a voice of thunder:

"Herding cattle suits you better than holding a council, you Heathen dogs."

"Silence, Kshechovski wants to speak," cried Charnota, who hoped that the celebrated colonel would speak in favor of the war.

"Silence! Silence," roared the others.

Kshechovski enjoyed extraordinary respect among the Cossacks, on account of the great services that he had rendered; on account of his warlike ability; and, strangely enough, because he was a nobleman. Consequently, all kept silence and awaited eagerly to hear what he might say. Khmyelnitski himself fastened his restless eyes upon him.

But Charnota had been mistaken when he expected that the colonel would declare in favor of war. Kshechovski had, with his quick wit, readily understood that he must obtain now or never, from the Commonwealth, the starostships and dignities of which he dreamed. He understood well that in the event of a peace with the Cossacks he would be the first whom the Commonwealth would seek to win over and pacify; and the Lord of Cracow would then not be able to make any opposition, for he was a prisoner. He therefore spoke as follows:

"My business is the sword, not the council; but, as a council has been called, I will give you my opinion, for I have deserved your favor as well as, if not better, than others. We undertook this war in order to recover our rights and privileges and the Voyevoda of Bratslav writes that they will be given back to us. Therefore, it will either be so or it will not. If this does not happen, let there be war. If we recover them, peace. Why this useless shedding of blood? If they satisfy us, and we satisfy the mob, the war will cease. Our father Khmyelnitski has wisely considered and arranged everything, so that we stand on the side of his Majesty, our illustrious King, who will consequently reward us. And, if the lords should be opposed to this, perhaps he will permit us to speak a word to them—and we will speak to them. But I would not advise sending away the Tartars. Let them make their camp on the Wild Lands and wait until we have one thing or the other."

Khmyelnitski's face brightened at these words and the colonels began to call out in increasing numbers that they

should give up the war and send ambassadors to Warsaw; and that they should beg the Lord of Bratslav to come in person and negotiate with them. Charnota was still screaming and protesting but the colonel fixed his threatening glance on him and said:

"You, you, Charnota, Colonel of Hadziats, you are shouting for war and slaughter, and, when at Korsun Dmokhovski's soldiers came to attack you, you squeaked like a little pig, 'Brothers, protect me!' and you ran away before your whole regiment."

"You lie," screamed Charnota, "I fear neither the Poles nor you."

Kshechovski sprang towards Charnota—some of the others were already clenching their fists against the colonel of Hadziats. The tumult recommenced. On the public square, the soldiery were bellowing like a herd of aurochs. Then Khmyelnitski stood up:

"Worthy gentlemen and colonels," he said, "we have determined to send ambassadors to Warsaw, who will represent our services to the illustrious King, and pray him for a reward; but whoever wishes war may have it—not with the king, not with the Commonwealth, for with these we have never carried on war, but with our greatest enemy, who is now wading in Cossack blood and yet continues to dye his hands in it, in his enmity against the Zaporojian army. I have sent letters and envoys to him and entreated him to give up this enmity and he murdered my envoys most cruelly; he has honored me, your commander, with no answer; and, in this manner has shown his contempt for the whole Zaporojian army. He is now marching hither from the other side of the Dnieper. He has destroyed Pohrebyshch to the last man; has punished innocent men, over whose death I have wept bitter tears; and now, as I heard early this morning, he has gone to Nimirov and has also left no one alive there. As the Tartars do not dare to march against him from fear and terror, it will not be long before he arrives here, in order to murder us, innocent ones, contrary to the will of our illustrious King, and of the whole Commonwealth; for, in his pride, he cares for no one and in his present rebellious attitude, he is ready to rise against the will of His Royal Majesty."

All was quiet in the council chamber. Khmyelnitski took breath and continued:

"God has rewarded us by a victory over the hetmans; but he is worse than the hetmans, worse than all the kinglets, a son of the devil who is the Father of lies. If I myself should march against him, he would, through his friends, raise a cry in Warsaw that we did not wish peace and would misrepresent our innocence to His Royal Majesty. In order that this may not happen, the king and the Commonwealth must be made aware that I do not wish the war; that I am sitting here quietly; and that he is bringing the war to our doors. That is why I cannot move for I must remain here to negotiate with the Lord Voyevoda of Bratslav. But in order that he, this devil's son, may not break our power, we must offer opposition to him and destroy his army, as we defeated the hetmans at the Zolta Woda and at Korsun. Therefore I entreat that you will march against him as volunteers and I will write to the king that this has happened without my knowledge, and from the absolute necessity of guarding against Vishnyovyetski's enmity and attacks."

A dep silence reigned in the council chamber.

Khmyelnitski continued:

"Whoever, therefore, among you, wishes to undertake this expedition I will give him sufficient forces, brave Cossacks, cannon and gunners that he may, with God's help cast down our enemy and obtain a victory over him."

Not one of the Colonels stepped forward.

"I will give him sixty thousand picked men," said Khmyelnitski.

Silence.

Yet these were all fearless warriors whose battle-cry had so often rung about the walls of Tsarogrod. Yes, perhaps each one feared to lose his laurels in the meeting with the terrible Yeremy.

Khmyelnitski let his eyes wander over the colonels and these could not stand his glance, but cast down their eyes. Vyhovski's face took on an expression of Satanic wickedness.

"I know a Cossack," said Khmyelnitski gloomily, "who would have stepped forward this moment and have dared this expedition; but he is not among us. . . . "

"Bohun," cried a voice.

"It is he; he has already destroyed a regiment of Yeremy's in Vasilov, but he was wounded in this battle and is lying in Cherkass, fighting death; and he is not here, I see no one who can take his place. Where is the glory of the Cossacks?

Where are the Pavluks, the Nalevaykos, the Lobodas, and the Ostranitsas?"

Then a short, fat man with a gloomy face, a fiery red moustache over his thin lips, and green eyes, arose from the bench and, standing before Khymelnitski, said:

"I will go!" It was Maxim Kshyvonos.

Shouts of approval arose from all sides.

But he leaned on his taff and spoke in hoarse, disjointed sentences:

"Do not think, Hetman, that I am afraid. I would have offered sooner, but I thought there were better men; but, if I must go, I will go. What have you? You have heads and hands. I have no head only a hand and a sword. Our mother bore us once, but war is my mother and my sister. Vishnyovyetski slaughters, so will I. He hangs, so will I. And you Hetman, give me good Cossacks, for the "blacks" are worth nothing against Vishnyovyetski, and I will go forward; will destroy castles, hew down, slay, and hang. Death to them, the white-handed gentlemen!"

Another ataman stepped forward.

"I will go with you, Maxim."

It was Pulyan.

Charnota of Hadziats and Hladki from Mirgorod and Nosach of Ostrensk will also go with you," said Khmyelnitski.

"Yes, we will go," they cried with one voice. Kshyvonos' example had given them courage.

"Against Yeremy, against Yeremy," thundered voices in the crowd.

"Forward! Forward!" repeated the company and, in a short time, the council-room was changed into a drinking-shop. The regiments who were destined for Kshyvonos drank themselves dead drunk—were they not going to death? The Cossacks knew that right well, but their hearts were free from fear. "Our mother bore us once," they said, with their leader; and therefore they acted as though death was already before them. Khmyelnitski encouraged them and the crowd followed his example. They began to sing; a hundred thousand voices; they drove the horses about, which tore round the camp, kicked up clouds of dust and caused indescribable confusion. They were chased with screams, with wild noise and laughter. Whole bands of men ran down along the river, even forcing their way into the hetman's quarters; until finally he ordered Yakubovich to disperse

them. They came to blows, then a violent storm drove them to the tents and wagons. At evening, a hurricane raged; thunder rolled from cloud to cloud; flashes of lightning illumined the whole region, now with white, now with red light. Amid the flashes, Kshyvonos moved out of the camp at the head of sixty thousand men, picked warriors and "blacks."

CHAPTER XI.

Kshyvonos marched from Alotserkva, passed through Skvira and Pohrebyshch towards Makhnovka and, wherever he passed the last traces of habitation disappeared. Whoever did not join his forces, perished by the knife. The very grain in the ear, the forests and gardens were burned down; and the prince also on his side was doing his best to destroy life. After the slaughter of Pohrebyshch and the bloody baptism which Colonel Baranovski has given to Niemierov the army destroyed several large detachments of Cossacks and pitched camp near Raygrod, for they had passed a month in the saddle. They were weakened by fatigue and death had considerably diminished their ranks. A rest was necessary, for the hands of these reapers were exhausted from their bloody harvest. The prince even hesitated, and considered whether it would not be better to go into a more peaceful land for a time, in order to rest, and to increase his forces; and, especially, on account of the horses, who resembled skeletons of animals rather than living creatures, as for a month, they had eaten no corn and had lived only on the down trodden grass. Here, after a week's halt, news was brought that troops were coming to the assistance of the army. The prince rode to meet them and actually met Colonel Janush Tyshkievich, the Voyevoda of Kiev who was at the head of fifteen hundred brave horsemen and, with him, Kryshtof Tyshkievich, subaltern judge of Bratslav, young Pan Aksak, almost a boy, but leading a well-armed company of hussars; besides a number of noblemen, among whom were Pans Sienyutov, Polubinski, Jytniskis, Jelowickis, Kierdeys, Boguslavskis, some with a following, others without; altogether about two thousnd horse not counting the servants. The prince was beside himself with joy; and, full of gratitude, he invited the Voyevoda into his house, the simplicity and bareness of which astonished him, for the prince, who in Lubni was accustomed to live like a king, in war times allowed himself no comfort, in order to set an example to

his soldiers. He was living therefore, in a single room, through whose narrow door the Voyevoda of Kiev could not pass on account of his enormous girth and he was obliged to have a servant push him through from behind. The furniture of the room consisted of one table, some wooden benches and a bed of planks, covered with horse hide; and besides these only a pallet in the doorway upon which a servant slept, that he might be ready at any moment. This simplicity surprised the Voyevoda, who loved comfort and always travelled with a great many rugs and pillows. As he stepped into the room, he looked at the prince in astonishment. He was surprised that such a great mind could live amid such simplicity and discomfort. He had seen the prince at the Diet in Warsaw, and was indeed distantly related to him though he had but slight acquaintance with him. As soon as the prince began to speak however, he knew at once that he was dealing with an extraordinary man and he, the old Senator, the old jovial soldier and comrade-in-arms, who was accustomed to slap his brother senators on their shoulders and to call Prince Dominik "my friend," and was even on confidential terms with the king, could not approach Vishnyovyetski with such familiarity although the prince had received him politely and was grateful to him for his timely assistance.

"Sir Voyevoda," he said, "God be thanked that you have come with some fresh men for I am already at my last gasp."

"I noticed that the soldiers of your Highness are quite worn out, poor fellows, and am not a little sorry to see it; for I have come to your Excellency with the request that you would come to my assistance."

"Is there any haste?"

"*Periculum in mora! Periculum in mora!* Some ten thousand vagabonds are approaching. Kshyvonos is leading them, and has been sent against your Highness, I have heard, from an informer. But he heard that your Excellency was going to Konstantinov, he turned off in that direction and on the road he besieged Machnovka and has caused such devastation that it cannot be described in words."

"I have heard about Kshyvonos and have been waiting here for him. As, however, he has escaped me, I see that I must go and look for him. Indeed, this matter can stand no delay. How strong is the garrison at Maknovka?"

"Two hundred Germans, very fine soldiers, are in the castle that should yet hold out for some time; but the worst of it is, that a great number of the nobles have swarmed into the town with their families, and as the town is only protected by ramparts and palisades it cannot hold out very long."

"Truly, the matter can bear no delay," repeated the prince.

Then, turning to his boy:

"Zelenski," he said, "go at once and call the colonels."

The Voyevoda of Kiev, in the meantime, took his seat upon a bench, to take breath. He looked round a little anxiously for signs of supper for he was hungry and liked good living.

The steps of armed men were heard approaching and the prince's officers entered the room. They were swarthy, emaciated, with unshaven beards, sunken eyes and the traces of unspeakable fatigue in their features. They bowed in silence before the prince and his guest, and waited to hear what he had to say.

"Gentlemen," said the prince, "are the horses saddled?"

"They are, your Highness."

"Ready to march?"

"As ever, your Highness."

"Good, in an hour we will set out to find Kshyvonos."

"Eh?" said the Voyevoda of Kiev looing in astonishment at Pan Kryshtof, the subaltern judge from Bratlav.

The prince however contiued:

"Colonel Poniatovski and Colonel Vyershul will first march out, and with them Colonel Baranovski and the dragoons and an hour later Vurtzel's cannon will follow them."

The colonels bowed and left the room and presently was heard the sounds of trumpets calling to saddle.

The Voyevoda of Kiev had not expected such haste; indeed he had not wished it, for he was tired and excited. He had calculated on resting twenty-four hours with the prince and thought he would then be in plenty of time, and now, he had to mount his horse without sleeping and without eating.

"My Prince," he said, "will your soldiers be able to reach Makhnovka, for I see that they are frightfully fatigued, and the road is long."

"Do not let your head ache on that account. They go to battle as to a singing."

"I see it; keen soldiers. But my men are tired from the journey."

"But you said, 'Periculum in mora!'"

"That is true; but we might at least rest for a night. We have come from the vicinity of Khymelnik."

"Sir Voyevoda, we come from Lubni, from the Dnieper country."

"We have been a whole day on the march."

"We have been a whole month."

Then the prince went out in order to superintend personally the order of march; but the Voyevoda stared at young Kryshtof, slapped his knees with both hands and said:

"Now I have found what I want. By God! they let me die of hunger here. They are hot-headed fellows. I came here for help, thinking that, after the great exertions, they would not march out for two or three days, and here they do not give me time to draw breath. May the devil take them! The strap which that rascal of a servant fastened badly has rubbed my foot; my stomach is growling . . . may the Devil take them! Makhnovka is Makhnovka, but the stomach is a stomach. I am also an old soldier, have seen more wars than these men, but do not go so head over heels. These are devils, not men! They do not sleep, they do not eat, only fight. As true as I love God, they do not eat. Did you notice those Colonels, Pan Kryshtof? Did they not look like spectres? What?"

"But they have the courage of lions," answered Pan Kryshtof, who was a zealous soldier. "Dear God! What confusion and disorder abound in other camps when it is a question of setting out on the march. How much running hither and thither, how much dragging of wagons back and forth, looking for horses—and here, listen, the companies of infantry are already setting out."

"Yes, yes, so they are, the devil," said the Voyevoda.

But the young Pan Aksak folded his soft boyish hands.

"O! he is a great commander," he said with enthusiasm.

"Milksop!" said the Voyevoda. "Cuntator was also a great commander. Do you understand me?"

The prince entered.

"To horse, gentlemen, we are setting out."

The Voyevoda could stand it no longer.

"Your Highness, let them bring me something to eat, for I am hungry," he cried in an outbreak of anger.

"Oh, my dear Voyevoda," said the prince, laughing and taking his arm, "pardon me, pardon me! I apologize with my whole heart, but in war, men forget those things."

"What, Pan Kryshtof, did I not say so? They do not eat!" said the Voyevoda turning to the subaltern judge from Bratslav.

The supper did not last long and, two hours later, even the infantry had already left Raygrod. The army took its way through Winnits and Lityn towards Khmyelnik. On the way, Vyershul came upon a horde of Tartars in Zaverobka whom he and Volodiyovski slaughtered to the last man, and also freed a couple of hundred prisoners, almost all girls. The devastated region which showed everywhere traces of Krshyvonos' hand began here. Stshyjavka was burnt down; its inhabitants murdered in the most frightful manner; the unfortunates had evidently offered resistance to Kshyvonos who, in return, had given them over to the sword and the flames. At the entrance to the village, the Pan Stshyjovski himself was hanging on an oak, and was immediately recognized by Tyshkievich's men. He was perfectly naked and wore around his neck an immense necklace of human heads which were threaded on a rope. They were the heads of his six children and his wife. In the village itself, which had been burned to ashes, the regiment saw on both sides of the way a long line of Cossack torches, that is to say, men with their hands raised above their heads, who were fastened to posts stuck in the ground, and wound round with straw covered with tar which had been set on fire. The greater number of them had only had their hands burned; the rain had evidently prevented the rise of the flames. These corpses, with their drawn faces, with their black stumps of hands raised to heaven were a terrible sight. All about there was a strong odor of decay; crows and ravens were hovering above the corpses and, on the approach of the army, flew away with a loud noise, in order to settle on the more distant posts. Several wolves fled before the approaching soldiers and hid themselves in the thicket. The train moved silently through the dreadful alley of "torches" and counted them. There were over three hundred odd. At length they passed through the unhappy village and breathed once more the pure air of the steppes; but the traces of devastation continued. It was the early part of July. The wheat was almost ripe and an early harvest was exepcted but entire crops were partially burned, partly trodden down, beaten apart, crushed into the ground. It looked as though a hurricane had passed over the land. And indeed a hurricane had passed over it;

the most dreadful of all—the hurricane of civil war. The soldiers of the prince had often seen flourishing regions destroyed after Tartar invasions; but such madness of destruction they had never in their life seen. The woods were burned down as well as the grain; where the fire had not destroyed the trees, the tongues of flame had burned off bark and foliage, blackened them with smoke and left the trunks standing like skeletons. The Voyevoda of Kiev saw this spectacle and could hardly trust his eyes, Miedzyakov, Zhar, Futor, Sloboda were a heap of ashes. Here and there the peasants had joined Kshyvonos. The women and children, however, had been taken captive by the horde that Vyershul and Volodiyovski had destroyed. On the earth devastation; in the air, flocks of crows, ravens, harvest. The traces of the Cossack army were constantly renewed. Here and there one came across broken wagons, corpses of men and animals that had not yet been given over to decay; broken pots, brass kettles, bags of damp flour, smoking ruins, overthrown new hay-stacks. The prince urged his company forward to Khmyelnik and did not give them time to draw breath. The old Voyevoda seized his head with both hands and repeated piteously:

"My Makhnovka! My Makhnovka! I see that we can never get there in time."

Meanwhile the news had reached Khmyelnik that it was not the old Kshyvonos himself but his son, who was besieging Makhnovka with several thousand men and that it was he who had commanded this inhuman devastation. The town, it was said, was already taken. The Cossacks had hewn down the nobility and the Jews; taken the noble ladies into their camp, where a worse fate than death awaited them; but the little castle under the command of Colonel Lev was still holding out. The Cossacks stormed it from the Bernardine monastery, in which they had killed the monks. Lev was fighting with the remnants of his garrison and of his gunpowder, could not hold out much longer than one night more. The prince therefore left the infantry, the cannon and the bulk of the army behind; comanding them to go to Bystshyk while he with the Voyevoda, Pan Kryshtof and Pan Aksak and two thousand men hastened to their relief. The old Voyevoda wanted to hold him back, for he had completely lost his head.

"Makhnovka is lost. We shall be too late! Let us give

it up and defend the other places and provide them with garrisons," pleaded he.

But the prince would not listen to him. The young subjudge from Bratslav urged an immediate advance, and the army was anxious for war.

"Now that we have come here, we will not go back without shedding blood," said the colonels and they went forward.

When within a half a mile of Makhnovka, a number of horsemen came riding at full speed to meet them. It was Colonel Lev with his comrades. When the Voyevoda saw him, he guessed at once what had happened.

"The citadel is taken?" he cried.

"It is," answered Lev, and, as he spoke, he fell in a dead faint; for he was cut with swords and wounded with bullets and had lost much blood. And the others began to relate what had happened. The Germans had been killed to the last man. They preferred to die rather than to give up. Lev had fought his way through the crowd and through the broken gates; but in the rooms of the tower a number of noblemen were still defending themselves and these must be assisted without delay. The soldiers put spurs to their horses. They soon came in sight of the town and castle, above which a thick cloud of smoke told of the fire that was just beginning. The day was already declining. A gold and purple glow shone in the heavens and the army at first took it for the reflection of a fire. By the bright light, one saw the regiments of the Zaporojians and the close ranks of the "blacks" who swarmed all the more boldly through the gates to meet the prince from the fact that no one in the town had heard anything of his being close at hand. They believed, rather, that only the Voyevoda of Kiev was coming to raise the siege. Vodka had evidently made them perfectly blind, or else, the taking of the citadel had filled them with immense self-confidence; for they came boldly down from the hill and began amid great rejoicing to form in battle order to the sound of kettle drums and trumpets. At this sight, a cry of joy arose from the Poles, and the Voyevoda of Kiev had an opportunity for the second time to admire the discipline of the prince's troops. They halted at the sight of the Cossacks and placed themselves at once in order of battle, the heavy cavalry in the centre, the light cavalry on both wings, so that there was nothing more to do, and they could begin operations at once.

"Pan Kryshtof, what kind of people are those," said the Voyevoda. "With one move they are in battle order. They could fight a battle without a leader."

The prince, however, as a cautious general, with his baton in his hand flew in and out between the companies, from one wing to another, overseeing everything and giving his last orders. The evening glow was reflected on his silver breastplate and he looked like a bright flame darting hither and thither among the ranks, for he was the only one that glistened, among the dark armor.

There was drawn up in the centre of the front line, three regiments; one commanded by the Voyevoda of Kiev himself; one commanded by the young Pan Aksak; and the third by Colonel Tyshkievich. Behind them, in the second line, the dragoons under Baranovski's command and, last of all, the prince's giant hussars with Pan Skshetuski at their head. The wings were commanded by Vyershul, Kushel and Poniatovski. They had no cannon, for Vurtzel had remained behind in Bystshyk.

The prince rode up hastily to the Voyevoda and motioned with his baton.

"You may begin first to avenge the insult put upon you."

The Voyevoda waved his baton in the air. His men bowed in their saddles and moved forward. One could at once recognize, by the way in which he commanded his company, that, although the Voyevoda was unwieldy and a loiterer and a man on whom years were beginning to tell, he was yet an experienced and valiant soldier. He did not allow his soldiers to dash forward to a violent attack, but led them slowly, in order to spare their strength; increasing the force of his attack, as he gradually approached the enemy. He himself rode in the front rank with his baton in his hand, his attendants carried his long heavy sword though it was not too heavy for his hand. The "blacks" swarmed on foot to meet the company, with scythes and flails in their hands in order to receive the first attack, and thus make it easier for the Zaporojians. They had hardly come within a hundred yards of each other when the mob from Makhnovich recognized the Voyevoda by his enormous bulk and stature and began to shout:

"Eh! Gracious Voyevoda, the harvest is at the door, why do you not command your serfs to go and reap. Your servants, gracious Lord, we will pierce your belly!"

A shower of bullets fell on the soldiers but did no harm, for they dashed forward like a storm wind. Both sides met with a crash. The clattering of scythes was heard and the rattling of the flails, as they fell on the shields. and from all directions arose cries and groans. The lances made a road through the thickly packed "blacks," through which the horses rushed like a hurricane; overturning, treading down and crushing everyone on their way and, as in a meadow, when a row of reapers sets to work, the luxuriant grass falls beneath their scythes and they move forward, swinging their scythe handles through the air, so did the immense masses of "blacks" grow less. They seemed to melt beneath the shower of blows; they disappeared; and, knocked over by the horses, they could no longer stand, and began to waver. Presently the cry was heard, "Save yourselves! Save yourselves!" The entire mob threw down their scythes, flails, hay-forks and muskets and started back in wild flight towards the regiments of Zaporojians that they had left in the town. But the Zaporojians feared that the fleeing mob might bring their ranks into confusion and they placed their lances at rest so that the mob at sight of this reception ran hither and thither with howls of despair. It was not long, however, before Kushel and Poniatovski, who had separated from the two wings of the prince's army, scattered them like chaff.

The Voyevoda, marching over the corpses of the "blacks" stood face to face with the Zaporojians; dashed forward upon them as they did upon him, for they wished to answer assault with assault; and they dashed into one another, like two waves that come from opposite directions and, at their meeting, form a high ridge of foam. Thus did the horses rear opposite one another, the horsemen forming a wall; and the swords above these walls looked like the foam. The Voyevoda soon saw that he had not to deal here with the "blacks" but with the picked, trained forces of the Zaporojians? The two lines pressed against each other and had to bend, as neither could force their way through. Corpses fell thickly about, for each man found his man, each sword, its sword. The Voyevoda himself hung his baton at his side; seized his sword, that his attendant was carrying, and worked in the sweat of his brow, puffing like a blacksmith's bellows. Beside him the two Pans Sinyutos, the Kierdeys, Boguslavskis, Yelovitskis, and Polubinskis were moving back and forth. On the side of the Cossacks, Ivan Burdabut was fighting most

savagely. He was lieutenant colonel of the Calmuck regiment; a Cossack of gigantic strength and stature, who was all the more terrible because his horse equalled him as a fighter. Many a man turned his horse aside, so as not to encounter this centaur who spread death and destruction around him. The brothers Sinyutos dashed towards him, but Burdabut's horse seized the young Andrey between his teeth and killed him in a moment. When the older brother Raphael saw this, he slashed his sword across the animal's forehead above the eyes. The horse was wounded but not killed, for the sword struck the brass button on the strap across the forehead.

But at this moment Burdabut pierced Raphael in the throat and killed him on the spot. Thus fell the brothers Sinyutos, and lay, with their gilded shields, in the dust beneath the horses' feet. Burdabut, however, darted like a flame into the other ranks and attacked Prince Polubinski, a youth of sixteen, whose right arm he cut off. Pan Urbinski saw this and rushed to avenge the death of his relation. He fired his pistol at Burdabut's face but missed it, and only carried away his ear and covered him with blood. Burdabut and his horse were now a frightful sight; both of them black as night, both covered with blood, both with wild eyes and distended nostrils, both raging like a hurricane. Urbinski himself did not escape death at his hands, like an executioner, Burdabut chopped off his head with one blow. The eighty-year old Jytynski and the two Nikchemnikh fell under his hand; the others began to draw back in terror, especially as behind Burdabut gleamed a hundred more Zaporojian swords and a hundred bloody lances. The wild Zaporojian leader finally perceived the Voyevoda of Kiev, and, with a tremendous shout of joy, he sprang towards him, overturning horses and riders in his way. The Voyevoda, however, did not retreat. Trusting in his enormous strength, he breathed heavily, like a wounded wild boar, raised his sword above his head, gave his horse the spur and dashed forward on Burdabut; the Voyevoda's last hour would certainly have come; the Fates would have certainly cut the thread of his life with their shears, which they did later at Okshei, if Silnitski, a noble youth, had not sprung like lightning upon the Zaporojian leader and seized him round the waist before he could cut him with his sword; for while Burdabut was occupied with him Colonel Kierdey shouted for help for the Voyevoda. In

a moment, some ten men were on the spot, and separated him from the Zaporojian, then a fierce struggle ensued. But the weary regiments of the prince began to waver before the superior strength of the Zaporojians. They retreated and were getting into confusion when the sub-judge of Bratslav and Aksak advanced with fresh companies. It is true, that at the same moment, new Zaporojian regiments also came into the fray; but, on the other hand, the prince was waiting with Baranovski's dragoons and Skshetuski's hussars who, up to this, had taken no part in the battle.

The bloody slaughter began afresh. Twilight had already fallen but the flames had spread to the farthest house in the town. The glow of the fire lighted up the battle-field, and one could see distinctly both ranks, the Polish and the Cossacks, as they attacked each other at the foot of the hill. One could see the color of the standards and even the faces of the soldiers. Vyershul, Poniatovski and Kushel were also in the thick of the fight; for after they had destroyed the mob, they began to attack the Cossack wings which, beneath their pressure, began to retreat towards the hill. The long line of fighters curved towards the town at both ends and this curve became still sharper for, as the Polish wings moved forward, the middle ranks overpowered by the Cossacks retreated towards the prince. Three new Cossack regiments advanced in order to break through the ranks; but, at this moment, the prince commanded Pan Baranovski's dragoons to advance and these reinforced the strength of the wavering ones.

The hussars, alone, remained with the prince. From the distance, they seemed like a thick wood growing straight from the ground, a threatening cluster of iron men, horses, and lances. The evening wind moved the banners above their heads and they waited patiently, not fretting to fight before the word of command—patiently, for, as warriors practised and experienced in many battles, they knew well that they would have their bloody share. Among them stood the prince in his silver armor, the gold baton in his hand, directing his strained glance on the field of battle. On the left hand, Pan Skshetuski, a little sideways near the end of the line. In his capacity of lieutenant, he had turned back his sleeve and waited; holding in his powerful hand, with arm bared to the elbow, a sword instead of a baton, waiting patiently for the word of command.

The prince, with his left hand shading his eyes from the

firelight, gazed upon the battle. Half of the Polish semicircle retreated slowly towards him overpowered by superior strength, for Baranovski could not hold them any longer; the same Baranovski who had conquered Niemivor. The prince saw how desperately hard was the task of the soldiers. The flash of sabres was seen above the black line of heads, but it soon vanished as the blow fell. Riderless horses plunged out of the crowd of combatants, neighing and running across the plain with floating manes, looking against the background of firelight like monsters of Hell. The red flag floating for a time above the crowd suddenly fell, to rise no more. But the glance of the prince flew across the line of fighting men beyond to the town where at the head of two picked regiments young Kshyvonos himself, stood awaiting the moment when he could plunge into the centre and completely break the wavering ranks of the Poles. At length he darted forward and rushed with a frightful yell upon Baranovski's drrgoons. But the prince was waiting for this moment.

"Forward," he cried to Skshetuski.

Skshetuski raised his sword and the iron wall advanced. They had not far to ride, for the advancing column had approached considerably. Baranovski's dragoons with the speed of lightning, divided and separated right and left in order to leave the way open for the hussars to reach the Cossacks, and they plunged through the open way with their whole might upon the conquering forces of Kshyvonos.

"Yeremy! Yeremy!" shouted the hussars.

"Yeremy!" was repeated by the whole army.

The dreaded name filled the hearts of the Zaporojians with sudden terror. Now for the first time they learned that it was not the Voyevoda of Kiev, but the prince, himself, who was commanding. Besides they were unable to offer any resistance to the hussars against whom their own energy had thrown them and who, like a falling wall, crushed all beneath them. The only salvation for them was to make a breach in their ranks by dividing and separating on both sides so as to allow the hussars to pass through, and then to attack them on both flanks, but the flanks were already protected by the dragoons and by Vyershul, Kushel and Poniatovski's light cavalry, who, after they had driven back the Cossack wings, forced their way to the center. Now the order of the battle was changed; for the light regiments lined up at two sides and

sort of formed at once a roadway, between which the hussars flew at mad speed; crushing men and horses, forcing their way and scattering everything before them. Plunging forward, bellowing and howling the Cossacks flew towards the hill and the town. If Vyershul's wing had succeeded in uniting with Poniatovski's wing, they would have been surrounded and slain to the very last man. But neither Vyershul nor Poniatovski dared to venture this, for the crowd of fugitives was too great, so they only attacked the flanks till their hands grew weary with wielding the sword.

Young Kshyvonos, although brave and rash, lost his head completely when he saw that his brief experience was powerless against such a leader as the prince; and fled at the head of his men toward the town. Vyershul who was standing at the flank spied the fugitive, sprang after him, and gave the young leader a blow in the face with his sword. It did not kill him for his helmet checked the force of the blow, but he was covered with blood and his courage forsook him completely. But Vyershul nearly paid for this act with his life; for, at that moment, Burdabut with the remainder of the Kalnitski regiment dashed towards him.

He had twice opposed the hussars, but twice, as if repulsed by superhuman power, he had been obliged to retreat like the rest. At length he restored order among his men and determined to attack Kushel on the flank and to make his way through the dragoons into the open field. But before he could force the passage through, the way that led to the hill and the town was so closely packed with men that a speedy retreat was impossible. The hussars advanced slowly towards this human throng, broke their lances and began to hack at the crowd with their swords. A confused, disorderly, wild battle began and raged without mercy in the midst of the crowd; amid the glow and the noise; amid the exhalations from men and horses. Corpse fell upon corpse, the hoofs of the horses sank in quivering flesh; at places the crowd was so closely packed that there was not even room to strike with the sword; they fought with clubs, knives and fists. The horses began to neigh. Here and there came cries of "Mercy, Poles!"

These cries grew louder, increased and drowned the clash of swords, the sound of breaking bones, the rattling breath and frightful gasp of the dying. "Mercy! mercy! masters," sounded ever more piteously; but compassion did not exist in

that mass of combatants. The fiery flames alone lighted them, as the sun through a storm.

Burdabut, alone, at the head of his Kalnitski soldiers did not beg for mercy. He had no room to fight and so, with his knife, he cut a path. First he attacked the stout Dziki and thrust him through the body, so that he fell from his horse.

"O Jesus," he cried, and lifted his head no more beneath the horse's hoofs which trampled out his entrails. There was soon room enough and Burdabut now raised his sword and cut off Zokolski's head, together with his helmet, and then he overthrew Priam and Tsertovich with their horses. There was more room. Young Zenobuish made a slash at his head; but the sword slipped from his hand and cut through the air, and the Zaporojian gave him a blow in the face and killed him on the spot. The Kalnitskis followed him, hewing with their swords and piercing with their daggers. "He is possessed! he is possessed!" cried the hussars. "The sword does not hurt him, the madman!" And he really had foam on his lips and mad fury in his eyes. Presently, he remarked Skshetuski and, once recognizing him as an officer by his turned up sleeve, he sprang towards him. All held their breath and stopped fighting to look at the encounter between the two dreaded warriors. For Skshetuski had not allowed himself to be alarmed by the cry "He is possessed!" But anger raged in his breast at the sight of so much carnage. He ground his teeth and charged, snorting with rage, upon the Zaporojian leader. They came upon each other with such force that their horses reared. The swords cut through the air and, suddenly, the sword of the Zaporojian was snapped in two by the stroke of the Polish sword. It seemed as if no power could save Burdabut, when he sprang and seized Skshetuski in such a tight clasp that both seemed to form one body—then his knife gleamed at the throat of the hussar.

Death flashed before Skshetuski's eyes, for he could not strike another blow with his sword; but like lightning, he let fall the sword that hung by a strap to his belt and with his hand seized the uplifted hand of the Zaporojian leader. For a moment, these two hands struggled convulsively in the air; but Skshetuski's hand must have been of iron, for the Zaporojian howled like a wolf, and the knife fell from his numbed fingers before the eyes of all, like ripe grain from the ear. Then Skshetuski let the crushed hand drop and, seizing him by the neck, forced his head down to the saddle tree; with

his left hand he grasped the baton at his side, brought it down once, twice—and the Zaporojian gurgled and fell from his horse.

The Kalnitski soldiers screamed aloud at this sight and hastened to avenge themselves; but as they did so the hussars fell upon them and cut them to pieces. At the other end of the line of hussars, the battle had never ceased; for the throng was not so great. There might be seen Longin, fighting furiously, 'cut cowl' and adorned with Anna's scarf. On the day after the battle, the knights gazed in astonishment at the scene of action and, as they saw the trunkless arms and hands, heads split open, bodies cut in half, whole paths covered with corpses of men and horses, they said softly to one another, "look, that is where Longin fought." The prince, himself, looked on these corpses and, although on the following day he was very much worried by news that he received, he marvelled for he had never seen such blows in his life.

The battle appeared to be coming to an end. The heavy cavalry first moved forward, driving before them the Zaporojian regiments who had sought shelter on the hill in the direction of the town. Kushel's and Poniatovski's regiments cut off the retreat of the fugitives, who were surrounded, but defended themselves with despair until the last man had fallen. But through their death they had saved the others, for when, Vyershul, two hours later, came into the town, with his Tartar guards, he found not a single Cossack left. The enemy, under cover of the darkness—the pouring rain had put out the fire—had quickly seized the empty wagons in the town, and, with the speed that is peculiar to Cossacks, made them ready for travelling and fled from the town across the Dnieper, burning all bridges behind them. The first thing Vyershul did, when he got into the town, was to set free a number of noblemen who had defended themselves in the citadel. The prince commanded Vyershul to punish the citizens who had united with the Cossacks, and placed himself at the head of a pursuing party; but he could not take the baggage train without cannon and infantry. The enemy having gained time by burning the bridges, for one was now obliged to go far along the river to cross, had fled so swiftly that the tired horses of the prince's cavalry could hardly reach them. The Cossacks, however, although celebrated for their defence in the train did not offer as valiant a resistance as usual. The terrible certainty that the prince had followed

them had taken away their courage so that they despaired of escape. And their last hour would certainly have come, for Pan Baranovski, after fighting the whole night, had already taken forty wagons and two cannon, had it not been for the Voyevoda of Kiev who opposed further pursuit and withdrew his men. This caused a sharp dispute between him and the prince, which was overheard by many of the colonels.

"Why," said the prince, "do you wish to spare the enemy, when you fought against them with such intensity in the battle? Do you wish to lose through indolence this morning the glory that you won last evening."

"Prince," answered the Voyevoda, "I do not know what spirit dwells in you, but I am a man of flesh and blood and need rest after my work, and so do my people. I will ever fight against the enemy as I have fought to-day. When he stands opposite me; but I will not pursue the defeated, the fugitives."

"Hew them down to the last man," cried the prince.

"And what then?" asked the Voyevoda. "This slaughter will come to an end; then old Kshyvonos will come and burn and destroy, and slaughter your men as he has done in Stshyjav and the unfortunates must atone for our work."

"O, I see how it is," cried the prince, already furious, "you, together with the Chancellor and the regiments belong to the peace party, who wish to put down the rebellion by negotiation. But, by the living God, nothing will come of it, as long as I grasp a sword."

But the Voyevoda answered, "I belong to no party, but to God; for I am old and will soon stand before Him; and that I do not wish that too heavy a burden of the blood that is shed in the peasant war should oppress me, should not surprise your Highness. . . If, however, your Highness feels hurt to think that the command was not given to you, I say to you, that as far as courage is concerned, you would be fitted for it; and yet, it is perhaps better that you should not have it; for you would drown, not only the rebellion in blood, but with it this unfortunate land."

The prince knitted his Jovian brows; his neck swelled, and his eyes shot fire, and all present were alarmed for the Voyevoda, when, suddenly, Skshetuski came up in haste and said:

"Your Highness, news from the old Kshyvonos."

The prince's thoughts were immediately directed in another channel and his anger against the Voyevoda disap-

peared. Four men were led forward who had arrived with news; among them, two, old, reverend priests who, at the sight of the prince, fell on their knees. "Save us, master, save us," they cried and stretched out their hands imploringly towards him.

"Whence do you come?" asked the prince.

"We are from Polonna. Kshyvonos the elder has besieged the castle and the town, and if your sword does not threaten his head we are all dead men."

The prince answered, "I know that a number of persons have taken refuge in Polonna but, as I was told, mostly people of Russia. You are in God's service and are bound not to join the rebellion and have opposed it, standing fast by your mother. And yet I fear treachery from you, such as I experienced at Nimirov.

Then the messengers began to swear, by all the saints in Heaven, that they had hastened to meet the prince, as a saviour and that the thought of treachery was quite foreign to them. And they spoke the truth, for Kshyvonos had besieged them with fifty thousand men, and sworn that he would put them all to death, simply because, as subjects of Russia, they would not join the rebellion.

The prince promised them help but, as his chief strength was in Bystshyk, he was obliged to wait for it. The messengers departed with comfort in their hearts. Then the prince turned to the Voyevoda of Kiev and said:

"Pardon me! I see myself that we must let the younger Kshyvonos go, in order to reach the old Kshyvonos. The young man may wait a little longer for the halter. I believe that you will not desert me in this new undertaking."

"As I live!" said the Voyevoda.

The trumpets now sounded and called to the regiments who had gone to the baggage-train to return. It was necessary to rest and give the horses a breathing space. Towards evening, the whole division came from Bystshyk and, with them, Pan Stakhovich, the envoy from the Voyevoda of Bratslav. Pan Kishel wrote a letter to the prince, full of expressions of admiration; he entreated the second Marius to save his country in its dangerous extremity. He depicted the joy that the arrival of the prince from the Trans-Dnieper had aroused in all hearts; and congratulated him upon his victory; only at the close of the letter, did it become evident what motive he had for writing. The lord of Bratslav told the prince that the

negotiations had begun; that he, himself, with other companions was going to Byalotserkiev and that he hoped to soothe and pacify Khmyelnitski. In conclusion, he begged the prince not to deal too severely with the Cossacks, and to give up as much as possible all warlike undertakings until the close of the negotiations.

Had one announced to the prince that his whole Dnieper country was devastated; that all the cities had ben razed to the ground, it would not have wounded him so deeply as did this letter.

Pan Skshetuski, Pan Baranovski, both the Tyshkieviches and Kierdeys witnessed his distress. The prince placed his hand over his eyes, his head fell backwards as though an arrow had pierced his heart.

"Dishonor, dishonor, God in Heaven, let me die, that I may not witness this thing."

A deep silence reigned among those present and the Prince continued:

"I would not live in this Commonwealth, for I should be ashamed. The Cossack 'blacks,' the peasantry, have flooded the country with blood; united with the Heathen against their own mother. The hetmans are beaten, the armies destroyed, the glory of the nation trampled underfoot. Authority is overcome, the churches burned down, the priests, the nobles slain, the women ravished; and upon these ruins, this dishonor, at sight of which our ancestors would have died—what does the Commonwealth answer? With the traitor, with her despoilers, with the allies of the Heathen she enters into negotiations and promises them satisfaction. O God, let me die, I repeat, for we can no longer live in the world who feel the dishonor of the mother country and bring our lives to her as a sacrifice."

The Voyevoda of Kiev was silent. Pan Kshyshtof, however, spoke after a short pause:

"Pan Kisiel is not the Commonwealth."

The Prince answered: "Do not talk to me of Kisiel. I know very well that he has a large party at his back. What he is doing is quite in accord with the views of the primate, the chancellors, Prince Dominik and many noblemen, who to-day, during the interregnum, have taken the rudder of the Commonwealth in their hands and represent its majesty, or rather, through weakness unworthy of a great nation, dishonor it. Not with speeches, but with blood must this fire be

extinguished; for it is more glorious for a knightly nation to be destroyed than to humiliate itself and bring upon itself the contempt of the whole world."

And once more the prince covered his eyes with his hand. The sight of this sorrow and pain was so overwhelming that the colonels hardly knew how to keep back the tears that came into their eyes.

"My Prince," Zatsvilikhovski ventured to say, "let them fight with their tongues, we will continue to fight with our swords."

"So be it," answered the prince, "my heart is breaking at the thought of what we ought now to do. When we heard of the misfortune of our country, did we not march through wild forests, through impassable swamps to reach here; have we not denied ourselves sleep, food, and drink; have we not sacrificed our last strength to save this, our mother, from downfall, from shame? Our hands fall from weariness, hunger gnaws us, our wounds are painful,—but we despise fatigue if we can only restrain the enemy. You tell me that I am hurt because I did not have the chief command. The world may judge whether those who hold it are worthy, and I call on God and on you as witnesses, that I, like yourself, have not sacrificed my blood for the sake of reward and dignities, but from pure love of our mother-country; and, as we are drawing our last breath, what do they announce to us—that these gentlemen of Warsaw and this Pan Kisiel in Hushch are thinking of conciliating the enemy. Dishonor and disgrace?"

"Kisiel is a traitor," cried Pan Baranovski.

Then Pan Stakhovich, an earnest and quiet man, arose and, turning to Baranovski, said:

"As a friend of the Voyevoda of Bratslav and serving under him I cannot suffer that he should be here called a traitor. His beard has grown gray with anxiety, and he serves his country as he thinks best. Mistakenly, perhaps, but honorably."

The prince did not hear this answer, for he was sunk in sorrow and thought.

Baranovski dared say no more in his presence, but he fixed his steely glance upon Stakhovich as though he would say: "I'll settle with you," and laid his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

Meanwhile Yeremy had awakened from his brooding thoughts and said gloomily:

"We have no other choice than either to disobey (for in the time of interregnum they rule), or to sacrifice the honor of the country, for which we suffered labors and fatigues. . . "

"From disobedience came all the evils of this Commonwealth," said the Voyevoda of Kiev very earnestly.

"Shall we then suffer the disgrace of the Commonwealth? If they should command us to-morrow to go to Tukhay Bey and to Khmyelnitski with a rope around our necks, should we also obey him?"

"Veto," said Pan Kshyshtof, the sub-judge of Bratslav.

"Veto," repeated Kierdey.

The prince turned to his colonels.

"Speak, old soldiers," he said.

Zætsvilikhovski spoke first.

"My Prince, I am seventy years old, I am an Orthodox Russian; I was a Cossack commissary. Khmyelnitski, himself, called me father. I ought to counsel negotiations, but if I must decide between disgrace or war, going as I am to the grave, I would say War!"

"War!" repeated Skshetuski.

"War! War!" repeated numerous voices, among them those of Kshyshtof, the two Kierdeys, Baranovski, and all present.

"War! War!"

"It shall be as you say," said the prince with dignity, and struck his baton on the letter of Pan Kisiel that lay open on the table.

CHAPTER XII.

A day later, as the army was halting in Ryltsov, the prince called Skshetuski to him, and said:

"Our fighting strength is weak and exhausted. Kshyvonos, however, has sixty thousand men, and his forces increase from day to day, for the blacks are flocking to him. I cannot count on the Voyevoda of Kiev, for, at heart, he belongs to the peace party; and, even if he accompanies me, he does so unwillingly. We must, in some way or other, try and increase our forces; and I have just heard that two colonels are stationed not far from Konstantinov, Osinski with the king's guard, and Korytski. Take, for safety, a hundred of my Semenov guards, go to these men and take them my command, that they should hasten and come to me without delay, for I wish to attack Kshyvonos in a few days. No one can do my commission as well as you, therefore I send you—and the matter is of the greatest importance."

Skshetuski bowed and set out the same evening at twilight for Konstantinov, so as to travel, without being observed. For, here and there, might be found Kshyvonos scouts, or swarms of blacks who were committing highway robbery in the forests and on the roads; and the prince had advised him to avoid any engagement so that he might not lose time. He therefore went along quietly, and, by daybreak, reached the pond of Visovari, where he came upon both the colonels and, at sight of them, felt very joyful. Osinski had an excellent dragoon regiment trained after foreign fashion, and Germans. Korytski had only German infantry, consisting exclusively of veterans of the Thirty Years War. These dreaded and admired soldiers were so well trained that they were like a sword in the hands of its commander. Both regiments were remarkably well armed and well provided with ammunition. When they heard that they were to join the prince, they shouted for joy; for they were longing for battle and knew that they would never have such a good chance under any other command. Unfortunately, both colonels refused to go;

for both belonged to the command of Prince Dominik Zaslavski and had special orders not to unite with Vishnyovyetski. In vain did Skshetuski explain to them what glory they would gain under the leadership of such a general, what services they might render the country; they could not be persuaded and said that obedience was, for soldiers, the first law and the first duty. They said also that they would unite with the Prince in case the safety of their regiments demanded it. Skshetuski returned with a heavy heart, for he knew how painful this disappointment would be to the prince, and how weary and exhausted his regiments were from the marches, from the continual encounters with the enemy, from the skirmishing with detached bands and, not least of all, through wakefulness, hunger, and exertion. Under such circumstances, it was almost an impossibility to measure their strength with that of the enemy, which was ten times greater. Skshetuski saw, therefore, quite clearly, that a delay must take place in the expedition against Kshyvonos in order to give the army some rest and to await the influx of fresh nobles to the camp.

Occupied with such thoughts, Skshetuski returned at the head of his Semenovs to the prince. He was obliged to go quietly, carefully, and only at night, in order to avoid Kshyvonos's advance guard and also the numerous detached bands, consisting of Cossacks and blacks, who at times were very strong. They gathered throughout the whole neighborhood, set fire to the villages, killed the nobles or captured the fugitives upon the highway. Thus, he passed through Baklay and came into the thick forests of Mshyniets, that were full of dangerous ravines and clefts. Fortunately, after a rainfall, the weather had cleared and the journey was easy. The July night was glorious, without a moon but lighted by stars. His Semenovs marched on the narrow forest path, guided by the Mshyniets foresters; trusty people who knew their forest thoroughly. A deep silence reigned in the woods, broken only by the crackling of the dry branches beneath the hoofs of the horses, when, suddenly, a sound as of distant singing, interrupted by shouts, came to the ears of Skshetuski and his men.

"Halt," said Skshetuski, softly, stopping his men. "What is that?"

An old forester stepped up to him and said:

"Those are crazy people, who wander about in the woods,

and scream. They have lost their reason, through the sight of the horrors that have occurred. Yesterday, we met a noble lady, who wanders about, looks at the pine trees and calls "Children, children!" It is evident that the peasants have killed her children. And then she stared at us and began to shriek so that our legs trembled. They say that there are many such people in all the forests."

Although Skshetuski was a knight without fear, a shudder went through him from head to foot.

"Perhaps they are wolves that are howling like that. One cannot distinguish it," he said.

"No indeed, sir, there are no wolves in the forests. They have all gone to the villages where there is enough of dead bodies."

"Dreadful times," cried the knight, "when the wolves live in the villages and crazy people howl in the forests. God! Oh, God!"

For a time, there was silence; one heard nothing but the rustling in the tops of the pine trees; but, presently, the distant voices grew louder and more distinct.

"Hey," said the forester, suddenly, "it seems as if there might be a crowd of men there. Remain standing here, or move slowly forward, and I and my companions will go and see what it is."

"Good," said Skshetuski, "we will wait here."

The foresters disappeared and were gone a whole hour. Skshetuski was beginning to grow impatient and even nourished a suspicion that they were plotting some treachery against him when, suddenly, one of them sprang from the darkness.

"It is they, sir," said he, approaching Skshetuski.

"Who?"

"The rebel peasants."

"How many of them are there?"

"There may be about two hundred. I do not know, sir, what we can do for they are in the narrow pass through which we must go. They have lighted a fire; we cannot see it from here, for it is in the valley. They have no sentries; it is possible to come within an arrow shot away."

"Good," said Pan Skshetuski. Turning to his Semenovs, he gave orders to two officers. The train moved quickly forward and only the crackling twigs could betray them. No stirrup struck another; no sword clanked; the horses who were

accustomed to stealthy attacks went forward, wolf fashion, without snorting or neighing. When the men came to the spot where the road turned, they noticed, at once, the fire and the indistinct forms of men. Skshetuski now formed his soldiers into three divisions. One remained here, the other moved along the narrow path so as to close the opposite entrance, and the third dismounted, crept forward on their hands and knees and lay on the extreme edge of the pass, immediately above the heads of the peasants.

Skshetuski, who was in this division, saw quite clearly, at a distance of from twenty to thirty paces, the whole camp. Ten fires were burning, but they did not flame up, for kettles with food were hanging over them. The smell of steam and of the boiling meat came up to Skshetuski and his soldiers. Around the kettles, stood or lay the peasants drinking and chatting. Some had vodki bottles in their hands, others carried pikes on the end of which were placed trophies, heads of men, women and children; the reflection of the fire revealed their dead eyes and their gleaming teeth. The same light shone upon the wild dreadful faces of the peasants. Immediately beneath the wall of rock some lay asleep, snoring loudly; others chatted; others raked the fire till it rose in a column of golden sparks. At the largest fire, with his back to the rocky wall and towards Skshetuski, sat a stout graybeard and twanged his lute, around him about thirty peasants had formed a semicircle.

Skshetuski heard distinctly the following words:

"Hey, dziad, sing about the Cossack Holota."

"No," cried another, "sing of Marusia (Mary) Boguslavka."

"To the devil with Marusia! Sing of the pan of Potock," cried the greatest number of voices.

The beggar struck the strings of his lute more forcibly, cleared his throat, and began to sing:

> "Stand and observe round thee, thou rich and noble lord,
> Soon wilt thou be like the man who possesses nothing
> He directs and moves everything, God Himself the merciful.
> All our deeds He weighs in his balance uprightly
> Stand and observe round thee, thou, who fliest so high,
> Above the clouds, thou knowest wisdom, wide and deep."

The old man here stopped a moment and sighed, and the peasants sighed with him. The crowd of listeners grew larger. But Skshetuski, although he knew that his people must be ready, gave as yet no signal for the attack. The quiet night, the flickering fire, the wild forms and the un-

finished song about Pan Nicholas Pototski awakened in the knight strange thoughts, emotions, and a longing which he could not explain to himself. The unhealed wounds of his heart opened afresh. He was seized with a deep sorrow for what had lately happened to him; for lost happiness; for those moments of peace and joy. He became plunged in thought and in reflection. The old man, however, continued to sing—

Stand and observe round thee, thou who makest war
With arrow and bow, with powder ball and sword
For in olden times also lived warriors and knights,
Who carried the sword and died through the sword!
Stand and observe round thee and give up thy pride,
Thou, from Potock, strides boldly to Slavuta
The innocent souls hast thou cruelly slain,
They own council art thou in Poland
Aud bearest thy sceptre with boldness and might.

And the dziad stopped singing again when, suddenly a stone grazed the elbow of one of the men and fell to the ground. Some of the peasants put their hands over their eyes and looked sharply towards the forest. Then Skshetuski knew that the time had come, and fired his pistol into the crowd.

"Strike! Kill!" he cried, and thirty Semenovs fired with precision and aimed at the peasants' faces, and, immediately after the shots were fired, they climbed like lightning down the steep wall of the pass, and plunged into the midst of the terrified and confused peasants.

"Strike! Kill!" resounded from the entrance to the narrow pass. "Strike!" repeated the wild voices farther back.

"Yeremy! Yeremy!"

The attack was so sudden, the panic so terrible that, although the peasants were armed, they offered hardly any resistance. It had already been told in the camp of the rebel blacks that Yeremy, through the assistance of the evil one, was able to be and strike in several places at the same time, and now his name, which fell so unexpectedly upon the ears of these who thought themselves secure, sounded like the name of the evil one, and their weapons fell from their hands. Besides the spikes and scythes could not be handled in such a narrow space, for the peasants had run like a crowd of sheep to the opposite side of the ravine, and cut over the heads and faces by the swords of their pursuers, trodden underfoot and, in mad fear, stretching their hands towards the merciless steel they met their death. The quiet wood was filled with the

calamitous sound of battle. Some sought to flee across the precipitous wall of the ravine. They climbed up, hurt their hands and fell back upon the points of the swords. Some died peacefully; others bellowed for mercy; others covered their faces with their hands, so as not to see the approach of death; others, again, threw themselves upon the earth, face downwards; and above the clash of swords and the screams of the dying were drowned by the cry of the assailants "Yeremy! Yeremy!"—a cry that made the peasants' hair stand on end and rendered the approach of death so much the more terrible.

The old singer, however, struck one of the soldiers such a blow in the face with his lute that he fell over and, seizing the others by the hand so as to prevent them from striking him with their swords, he bellowed like an ox in his terror.

When the rest of the soldiers saw this, they hastened to the spot to cut him down, but Skshetuski sprang forward.

"Take him alive! Take him alive!" he cried.

"Stop!" roared the old man, "I am a nobleman, *loquor latine!* (I speak Latin.) I am not a dziad; stop, I tell you! Robbers! Rascals! Sons of horses!"

But the old man had not finished his litany when Skshetuski looked in his face and screamed; so loud that the walls of the ravine re-echoed with the sound:

"Zagloba!"

And suddenly fell upon his neck like a wild animal; clenched his fingers on the old man's arms, pressed his face against his, shook him as if he were a pear tree and cried:

"Where is the princess? Where is the princess?"

"She is alive; she is well; she is in safety!" answered the old man screaming. "Let me alone, you devil, you're shaking my soul out of me."

Skshetuski was so overcome at the joyful news that he, whom neither imprisonment nor wounds; pain nor the terrible Burdabut had been able to conquer became suddenly weak. His hands fell at his sides; great drops of sweat started on his brow; and he sank on his knees, covered his face with his hands, leaned his head against the rocky wall and remained thus in silence—one saw that he was giving thanks to God.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the unfortunate peasants had been cut down, except some whom they brought bound, in order to give them over to the executioner in the camp and to extort confessions from them; the others lay stretched out dead.

The battle was over; the noise ceased; the soldiers gathered round their leader and, when they saw him on his knees beside the rock, they looked at him uneasily, as if they feared he might have been wounded. But he rose to his feet and his countenance was as bright as though sunrise was dawning in his soul.

"Where is she?" he asked Zagloba.

"Is she safe?"

"In Bar."

"The castle is strong and fears no attack; she is in the castle of Panna Slavoshevska with the nuns."

"Praised be God the most high," said the knight, and his voice trembled with deep emotion, "give me your hand: I thank you from the depths of my soul."

Suddenly, he turned to his men:

"How many prisoners have you?"

"Seventeen," answered the soldiers. Then Sketshuski said: "A great happiness has come to me and my soul is filled with compassion; let them go free."

The Semenovs could not believe their ears; that was not the custom in Vishnyovyetski's army.

Skshetuski slightly frowned.

"Let them go free," he repeated.

The soldiers moved away, but in a few minutes the oldest sergeant came back and said:

"Lieutenant, you may not believe it, but they do not dare to go away."

"And are they unbound?"

"Yes."

"Then leave them here. Mount your horses."

"Half an hour later, the soldiers defiled along the narrow forest path amid absolute silence. The moon had risen and its silver beams pierced through the forest and lighted its dark depths. Pan Zagloba and Skshetuski rode at the head and conversed.

"Tell me all you know about her," said the knight. "Then you took her out of Bohun's hands?"

"Yes, I tied up his head as a farewell token so that he might not scream for help."

"You did splendidly, as true as I live! But how did you get to Bar?"

"Eh; I could tell you a good deal about that, and I will have to tell you some other time. I am frightfully tired and

my throat is parched by singing songs for the people. Have you not something to drink?"

"I have a little jug of brandy; here it is."

Zagloba seized the jug and placed it to his lips and one heard nothing but a gurgling. Skshetuski, however, in his impatience could wait no longer and asked:

"In good health?"

"What?" answered Zagloba. "To a dry throat everything seems healthy."

"But I am asking about the princess."

"The princess, sound as a nut!"

"God be praised and thanked! Is she happy in Bar?"

"She could not be better off in heaven. Everyone loves her on account of her beauty. Panna Slavoshevska loves her as her own child, and you could not count on your rosary the number of lads who are in love with her. But she thinks as much of them as I now think of your empty jug, and is constant in her love for you."

"God bless her, the darling!" said Skshetuski. "Then she remembers me with love?"

"Remembers you? I tell you I never could understand where she found breath for so many sighs. Every one has compassion for her, especially the nuns, whom she completely won over by her gentleness. Has she not also compelled me to all sorts of foolish acts that I have nearly paid for with my life. I was to find you in any case, in order to let her know whether you live and are well. She wanted to send messengers several times but no one dared undertake it until I finally took pity on her and set out for the camp. If I had not been disguised, I would certainly have lost my head but the peasants everywhere took me for a beggar; for I sing beautifully."

Skshetuski was speechless with joy. A thousand thoughts and remembrances crowded together in his mind. Helena seemed to stand before his very eyes, just as he had seen her the last time in Rozloga, immediately before his departure for Sich. Pretty, slender, blushing, with her velvety black eyes with their irresistible fascination. Now it seemed to him as though he saw her, as though he felt the glow that radiated from her cheeks, as though he heard her sweet voice. He thought of that walk in the cherry-wood, he thought of the cry of the cuckoo and of the questions that he had asked it; and of Helena's modesty when the cuckoo

prophecied that she would have twelve sons. His soul went out from him, his heart was intoxicated with love and bliss; and all past suffering disappeared, as a drop in the ocean. He did not know, himself, what this strange feeling was. He wished to cry aloud, to sink on his knees and thank God again; then to look back into the past, then to ask, and ask questions without end. Presently he repeated:

"She lives; she is well?"

"She lives; she is well," answered Zagloba, like an echo.

"And she sent you here?"

"Yes."

"And have you a letter?"

"I have."

"Give it."

"It is sewed up and now it is night; be satisfied."

"I cannot; you see that sir, yourself."

"I see it."

Zagloba's answers became ever more laconic. Finally his head nodded once or twice, and he was asleep.

Skshetuski saw that there was nothing to be done with him and he gave himself up again to thoughts. They were only interrupted through the tramping of horses, evidently a large division of cavalry that was swiftly approaching. It was Poniatowski with the prince's own Cossacks which the prince had sent to meet Skshetuski, fearing that some harm might have happened to him.

CHAPTER XIII.

One can easily understand how the prince received the news of Osinsk's and Korytski's refusal, which Skshetuski brought him at daybreak. Things had so happened that it needed a great soul like that of the iron prince not to collapse; not to despair; not to let his hands fall at his side. In vain did he spend an enormous fortune in maintaining the army, in vain like a caged lion, did he hurl himself this way and that; in vain did he chop off one head of the rebellion after another; did he perform prodigies of valor; all in vain! The moment would come in which he would feel his own powerlessness; would retire somewhere into a peaceful country, and become mute witness of all that happened in the Ukraine. And who had condemned him to inaction—not the sword of the Cossacks, but the apathy of his own people. Had he not justly hoped, when he moved out in May from the other side of the Dnieper country, when, like an eagle, he swooped down from the height upon the rebels; when, amid the universal fear and confusion, he had raised his sword above his head, that the whole republic would speedily hasten to help him and entrust their power to the avenging sword in his hands. The king was dead and, after his death, the command had fallen into other hands. He, the prince, they had ostentatiously forgotten. That was the first concession they had made toKhmyelnitski. But it was not on account of offended dignity that the soul of the prince now suffered, it was at the thought that the downtrodden Commonwealth had already sunk so low that she retreated before the Cossack, and preferred to restrain his daring hand through negotiations. Since the battle at Makhnovka, the news that reached the camp became more and more unfavorable; first, the communication respecting the negotiations that were being entered into by Pan Kisiel, then the news that the rebellion had spread over Volhynian Polesia—finally the refusal of the colonels showed clearly the unfriendly attitude of the Commander-in-chief Prince Dominik Zaslavski Os-

trogski towards Vishnyovyetski; and during Skshetuski's absence Pan Korsh Zienkovich came to the camp with the news that the whole of Ovruts was in flames. The people there were peaceful and had taken no part in the rebellion; but the Cossacks had attacked them and Kshechovski and Polkshenjits had compelled the peasants to join his ranks; and then the noblemen's houses and the towns were set on fire, and the nobles who did not flee were cut down; among them old Pan Yalets, a faithful servant and friend of the house of Vishnyovyetski. The prince had, therefore, determined, after uniting with Osinski and Korytski, to destroy Kshyvonos and then to march northwards to Ovruch in order to come to an understanding with the hetman of Lithuania and thus place the rebels between two fires. But all these plans were brought to naught through the orders that Prince Dominik had given his two colonels. For, after all his marches, battles, and fatigues, Yeremy, was not strong enough to measure his forces with those of Kshyvonos especially as he could not absolutely depend on the Voyevoda of Kiev, Pan Janush, who really belonged heart and soul to the peace party. He had taken service under the authority and command of Yeremy, and was obliged to accompany him. But the more he saw that authority weakened the more he was inclined to oppose the prince's thirst for battle, as will soon be made evident.

Skshetuski gave an account of his expedition and the prince listened to him in silence. All the officers were present at the audience. All faces lowered when he told of the refusal of the two colonels and all eyes were directed to the prince, who said,

"So Prince Dominik sent them orders forbidding them to come!"

"He did; they showed me his writing."

Yeremy leaned his elbows on the table and buried his face in his hands. After a while he said:

"This is, in truth, more than a man can bear. Must I work all alone and, instead of the expected assistance, meet only with obstructions. Could I not have gone quietly to Sandomir and remained there peacefully on my property. If I did not do it, it was because I love my country; and this is now my reward for my labors, for the loss of my fortune, for blood . . . "

The prince spoke quietly; but so much bitterness, so much

pain trembled in his voice that all hearts were filled with sorrow. The old colonels, veterans of Putivel, Starts, Kumeyka, and the young warriors in the last war, looked at him with inexpressible anxiety in their eyes, for they knew well what a hard struggle this iron man was undergoing. How terribly his pride must suffer from the humiliations that were heaped upon him. He, the prince, "By the Grace of God," —he ,the Voyevoda of Russia, the Senator of the Commonwealth, must retreat before a Khymelnitski, before a Kshyvonos; he, almost a king, who, a short while before, had received the ambassadors of the neighboring rulers, was forced to retreat from the field of honor; in order to shut himself up in some little castle and wait for the result of a war that would be carried on by others, or the conclusion of degrading negotiations. He, chosen for the highest missions, and filled with a consciousness of his ability to fulfill them—must now acknowledge his powerlessness.

The sorrows and the fatigues of the past weeks were evident in his appearance. He had become much emaciated; his eyes were sunken; his raven black hair showed streaks of gray; but a tragic calm overspred his countenance, for his pride would not allow him to betray his sorrow.

"Ha, let it be as it will," he said, "we will show this ungrateful mother that we cannot only fight for her but die for her. By Heavens! I would far rather die a glorious death in some battle than wage a civil war against these peasants—but it cannot be otherwise."

"My Prince," interrupted the Voyevoda of Kiev, "do not speak of death, for although God hides from our sight what may befall us it may yet be a long time before our death. I respect your warlike genius and your knightly spirit, but I cannot blame the viceroy, nor the chancellor, nor the military officers for endeavoring, through negotiations, to put an end to this civil war; for we are shedding the blood of brothers, and from the most determined obstinacy on both sides; a foreigner, alone, can reap the benefit."

The prince looked long into the eyes of the Voyevoda and said gravely:

"If you show mercy to the conquered they will receive it with gratitude and never forget it, but you will only earn the contempt of the victors. Oh if this people had never been wronged! But, once the rebellion has been set on foot, it must be crushed, not by negotiations, but with blood. Otherwise, disgrace and ruin will be ours."

"Ruin is more certain if we carry on war on our own account," answered the Voyevoda.

"Does that mean that you no longer wish to accompany us."

"Your Highness, I call God to witness that I am not acting in bad faith towards you, but my conscience tells me that I must not give my men over to certain destruction; for their life is of value and may yet be of service to the Commonwealth."

The prince was silent. After a few moments, he turned to his officers.

"Old comrades in arms, you will not leave me, will you?"

All the officers, as if impelled by the same power, sprang towards the prince; some kissed his robes, others clasped his knees, others raised their hands to heaven and exclaimed:

"We will stand by you to our last breath, to the last drop of blood."

"Lead us, lead us; we wil serve you without pay."

"My Prince, grant that I may also die at your side," exclaimed young Aksak, blushing like a girl.

At this sight, even the Voyevoda of Kiev was touched. The prince went from one to the other, putting his hand on each head and thanking them. A tremendous zeal had filled the hearts of young and old. The eyes of the warriors gleamed; their hands clutched their swords.

"I will live with you; I will die with you," said the prince.

"We will conquer," exclaimed an officer. "On to Kshyvonos. On to Polonna! He who wishes to leave us may do so. We will conquer without assistance; we will share neither glory nor death with anyone."

"Gentlemen," said the prince, "my wish is that before we march on Kshyvonos we shall take a short rest to restore our strength. We have now been three months in the saddle; our bodies are suffering from the labors, fatigues, and the inclemency of the weather. We have no horses; our foot soldiers are barefooted; we will therefore march to Zbaraj, refresh ourselves and rest. Perhaps some new regiments may join us, and then we will go with renewed strength into the battle."

"When does your Highness command us to set out?" asked Zatsvilikhovski.

"Immediately, old comrade!"

The prince now turned to the Voyevoda.

"And where does your Grace intend to go?"

"To Gliniana, for I hear that the regiments are collecting there."

"Then we will accompany you to a peaceful region so that no misfortune may happen to you."

The Voyevoda answered nothing for he was feeling a little uncomfortable. He was leaving the prince, and yet the prince was thinking only of his welfare and offering to accompany him. Was there irony in the words? The Voyevoda did not know. He was of the opinion, however, that the Prince's officers looked at him with increasing distrust, and it was evident that in any other, less well-disciplined army, there would have been an outbreak against him.

He bowed, therefore, and went out. The officers scattered, each one going to his regiment, in order to prepare for the march. Skshetuski alone remained with the prince.

"What kind of soldiers are in those regiments?" asked the prince.

"You cannot find better ones anywhere? The dragoons are trained after the German fashion and, in the infantry guards, are only veterans from the Thirty Years' War. When I saw them I imagined I saw Roman legions before me."

"What's the strength?"

"Two regiments. Three thousand men in all, counting the dragoon."

"' Tis a pity, a pity. One could do great things with such regiments."

Sorrow was visible in the features of the prince. After a pause he said, as though to himself.

"The choice of commanders-in-chief is unfortunate in such a time of necessity. Ostorog would be all right if war could be won with eloquence and Latin. Konyetspolski, my brother-in-law, has the blood of warriors in his veins, but he is a young man, without experience, and Zaslavski is the worst of all. I have known him a long time, a man of small courage, and shallow understanding. His business is to sleep during the war, not to command armies. No, I will not say it aloud, or they might accuse me of jealousy, but I do say terrible times are coming, and now, just now, such men have taken the rudder in their hands! God, Oh God, spare me this cup. . . . What will become of the country? When I think of it, I long for death; for I am very weary and I say to you, I shall not be with you much longer."

"My soul longs for war but my body lacks strength."

"Your Highness should take more care of your health, for it is of great importance to the whole country; and one can see that your labors have pulled down your Highness very much."

"The country thinks otherwise, as can be easily seen; or they would not have passed me by. And now, they are taking the sword out of my hand."

"God grant that when Prince Charles exchanges his bishop's mitre for a crown, he will know whom to exalt and whom to punish. But your Hnghness is still powerful enough to ask help from no one."

"I will go my own way."

The prince probably did not notice that, like the other petty kings, he desired to carry out a policy of his own; but even if he had noticed it he could not have acted in any other manner, for he had only one object in view; that was, to save the honor of the Commonwealth.

Again, there was a long silence, which was at last broken by the neighing of horses, and the sound of the bugles. The regiments were preparing to march. The noise awakened the prince from his reflections. He shook his head as though he would cast off his sorrow and his unpleasant thoughts and then said:

"And did you have a quiet journey?"

"I met in the forest of Mshyniets a large band of peasants, about two hundred men, whom I destroyed."

"Good, and did you bring back any prisoners, for that is also very important."

"I had some prisoners. . . . but—"

"But you have killed them? What?"

"No, your Highness, I let them go free."

Yeremy looked at Skshetuski in astonishment; then he suddenly frowned:

"What does that mean? Do you also belong to the party of peace? What does that mean?"

"Your Highness, I have brought back an informant; among the peasants, we found a disguised nobleman, who had escaped death. I let the others go free because God granted me mercy and comfort. I will willingly bear the penalty. This nobleman is Zagloba, who brought me news of the young princess."

The prince quickly approached Skshetuski.

"She lives; she is well?"

"Thank God she is."

"And where did she find refuge?"

"She is in Bar."

"That is a strong fortress. My boy!" here the prince raised his hands, and seizing Skshetuski's head, he kissed him repeatedly upon the forehead. "I rejoice in your joy, for I love you as a son."

Pan Yan kissed the prince's hand very heartily and although he would at any time have willingly shed his blood on Yeremy's account, he felt anew that he would be ready to spring into the flames of hell at his command. Thus did the threatening, terrible Yeremy understand how to win the hearts of his knights.

"Well, I am not surprised that you let these peasants go. You shall go unpunished. But this nobleman is quite a character. So he brought her from the Trans-Dnieper as far as Bar? Thank God! This is a great comfort to me in these sad times. He must be a very knowing fellow. Bring this Zagloba to me!"

Skshetuski flew to the door which, at this moment, suddenly opened and Vyershul's red face appeared. He had returned with the Tartar body guard with whom he had been sent forward.

"My Prince," he cried, breathing heavily. "Kshyvonos has taken Polonna and slaughtered ten thousand men, women, and children."

The officers began to assemble again and crowded about Vyershul. The Voyevoda of Kiev also came up. The prince stood as if turned to stone, for he had not expected such news.

"But they were only people of Russia who were there. It cannot be possible."

"Not a soul escaped from the town."

"Do you hear," said the prince, turning to the Voyevoda, "you want to enter into negotiations with such an enemy, who does not even spare his own countrymen.."

"Oh, souls of dogs, if this is so, may the devil take them all. I will go with you, Prince."

"Then you shall be my brother," said the prince.

"Long live the Voyevoda of Kiev," said old Zatsvilikhovski.

"Long live unity!"

And the prince turned to Vyershul:

"Whither are they marching from Polonna? Is nothing known."

"It seems they are going to Konstantinov."

"God in heaven! Then Osinski's and Korytski's regiments are lost, for they cannot get away in time with the infantry. We must forget the insult, and hasten to help them. To horse! To horse!"

The face of the prince beamed with joy and a flush overspread his thin cheeks; for the road to glory once more lay open before him.

CHAPTER XIV.

The army passed by Konstantinov and halted in Rosolovtsa. The prince had calculated that when Korytski and Osinski should receive news of the taking of Polonna, they would be obliged to retreat to Rosolovtsa and, if the enemy should follow them, it would unexpectedly fall into the hands of the entire army of the prince, as into a trap, and thus suffer most certain defeat. This calculation was fulfilled, to a great extent. The army took its stand and waited in readiness for a battle. Larger and smaller advance guards was sent out on all sides from the camp. The prince remained in the village with several regiments and waited. . . Towards evening Vyershul's Tartars announced that infantry were coming from Konstantinov. The prince stepped out from the door of his quarters surrounded by his officers and, with him several special attendants, in order to see the approaching soldiers. Meanwhile, the regiments, after they had been heralded by trumpet blasts, halted outside the village; and two colonels hurried at full speed to the prince, in order to offer him their services. It was Osinski and Korytski. When they observed Vishnyovyetski and his stately suite of knights, they became confused, as they were uncertain how they would be received. They bowed low and waited in silence for the prince to speak.

"The wheel of fortune spins and humbles the proud," said the prince. "You would not accept our invitation and now you come unsought."

"Your Highness," said Osinski, boldly, "from our very soul, we desired to serve under you but the orders were exact. He who gave them must answer for them. We beg for pardon although we are guiltless, for, as soldiers, we had to obey in silence."

"Then has Prince Dominik recalled his orders?" asked the prince.

"The command has not been recalled," said Ozinski, "but it no longer binds us; for the only help and safety for our

army lie in your Highness's mercy and, under your command, we will henceforth live, sire, and die."

These manly words and the officer's appearance made the best impression upon the prince and his companions-in-arms. Osinski was a renowned soldier, and, although still young, for he was not more than forty, he was already rich in experience of war, which he had gained in foreign armies. Every soldier's eyes rested with satisfaction upon him. Tall, straight as a pine, with a yellow moustache curving upward and a Swedish beard, he completely reminded one in bearing and appearance of the commanders in the Thirty Years' War.

Korytski, a Tartar by origin, did not resemble him in the least. Of small stature and not well proportioned, he had a gloomy expression and looked strange in the foreign uniform, which did not suit his Oriental features. He commanded a regiment of picked German infantry and was noted, as much for his courage as for his sullenness, and the iron discipline that he maintained among his soldiers.

"We are waiting for your Highness's commands," said Osinski.

"I know that the soldier must obey, and if I sent for you it was because I did not know of the command. From now on, we will pass many good and bad hours in each other's company; but I hope that you will like your new service."

"If only your Highness is satisfied with us and our soldiers."

"Good," said the prince. "Is the enemy far behind you?"

"The vanguards are near but the body of the troops cannot reach here until early to-morrow."

"Good, then we shall have time. Give your regiments orders to march across the square, in order that I may see them and find out what kind of soldiers you have brought me and if we can do much with them."

The colonels returned to their regiments and shortly came into the camp at their head. The soldiers of the prince's own regiments came hurrying along like ants to see their new comrades. At the head were the royal dragoons, under Captain Ciza, in heavy Swedish helmets with high crests. They rode matched Podolian horses. The men, newly rested, dressed in bright, glittering uniforms, were a refreshing contrast to the prince's weary, worn out men, whose uniforms were tattered and faded by sun and rain. Osinski and his regiment followed them and Korytski's brought up the rear.

A murmur of praise was heard from the prince's officers at the sight of the deep ranks of the Germans. Their doublets were uniformly red; their muskets glittered on their shoulders. They marched thirty abreast and, as one man, with even, powerful, thundering step. They were all stoutly-built, broad-shouldered fellows—experienced soldiers who had been in many countries and many battles; mostly veterans of the Thirty Years' War, inured to war, well disciplined and experienced.

As they approached the prince, Osinski called out, "Halt!" The regiment stood as if rooted to the spot; the officers raised their staffs in the air; the ensign waved the flag three times and then lowered it before the prince. "Forward," cried Osinski. "Forward," repeated the officers and the regiment moved forward.

In the same manner or even in better form, did Korytski lead forward his men and, at sight of them, all the soldiers' hearts rejoiced. Yeremy, who was a judge if anyone was, placed his hands on his sides in his satisfaction and looked on smilingly; for he was lacking in infantry, and it was certain that he could find no better ones in the whole world. He felt strengthened and hoped to be able to carry out great military undertakings. The officers discussed various military matters and the different kind of soldiers that might be seen in the world.

"The Zaporojian infantry is good, especially in attacking a fortification," said Sleshinski. "But these fellows carry off the palm, they are better drilled."

"Bah! much better," said Migurski.

"But they are heavy men," said Vyershul. "If they should attack me, I would undertake, with my Tartars, to make them so weary in two days that on the third day I could slaughter them like sheep."

"What are you talking about? The Germans are valiant soldiers."

Here Longin broke in in his singing, Lithuanian voice:

"How God the Lord in His mercy has endowed the different virtues. I have heard that there is nothing in the whole world superior to our cavalry; and again that neither we nor the Hungarian infantry can compare with the Germans."

"Because God is just," said Zagloba, "He has given you, for instance, a large fortune, a large sword and a heavy hand; but, to make up for it, very little wit."

"He has attacked him like a horseleech," said Skshetuski, laughing.

Pan Podbipyenta blinked his eyes and said with his accustomed good nature:

"That is unpleasant to hear. He gave you, I should say, too long a tongue."

"If you think that He has done wrong in giving me such a one as I have, you will go to Hell with your chastity; for you are setting yourself up against the will of God."

"Ah! Nonsense, no one can talk you down. You chatter and chatter."

"And do you know what distinguishes a man from an animal?"

"Well, what?"

"Reason and speech?"

"Ah! he caught it that time," said Colonel Mokrski.

"If you do not understand why the best cavalry are among the Poles and the best foot soldiers among the Germans, I will explain to you."

"Well, why?" asked several voices.

"See here, when God created the horse he led it out that men might praise his work. Beside him stood a German, for they make their way everywhere. God showed him the horse and asked him in German, 'What is that?' and the German answered, 'Pferd.' What, said the Creator, who had heard, 'do you say Pfe[1] to my work? You slovenly fellow, you shall not ride upon this animal and, if you do, it will be the worse for you.' With these words, he gave the horse to the Poles. That is why the Polish cavalry is the best. The Germans then began to hurry along on foot and to beg forgiveness of God; and that is how they have developed such an excellent infantry."

"You related that very artistically," said Podbipyenta.

The conversation was interrupted here by a guest, who came with the announcement that some forces were approaching the camp; that they could not be Cossacks, for they did not come from Konstantinov, but from an entirely different direction, from the River Zbrucha. Two hours later, these same companies approached, with such a blast of trumpets and beating of drums, that the prince was annoyed, and sent word to them to keep quiet, as the enemy was in the vicinity.

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[1] Pfe in Polish means fie, or pshaw.

It proved to be a royal cavalry regiment commander, Samuel Lashch, a celebrated adventurer, a law-breaker, a companion of gypsies and a bully, but a valiant soldier. He was at the head of eight hundred men of the same sort as himself; some of them nobles, some Cossacks, who all would have to hang if justice were done. But Prince Yeremy did not let himself be frightened by the unruliness of the soldiers, for he hoped that, in his hands, they would be transformed into meek lambs; and compensate, by their courage and bravery, for all that they lacked otherwise. It was, therefore, a lucky day. Only yesterday, through the disaffection of the Voyevoda of Kiev, the prince had determined to defer the war until troops should come to his assistance; and to retreat into a quieter district in order to rest—and, to-day, he stood at the head of twelve thousand men, and, although Kshyvonos counted five times as many, yet, as they consisted for the greater part of blacks, their armies might be considered of equal strength. The prince thought no longer of rest; he shut himself up with Lashch, the Voyevoda of Kiev, Zatzvilikhovski, Maknitski, and Osinski and they took counsel regarding the continuation of the war. It was resolved to give battle to Kshyvonos on the following morning; and, if he should not advance, to go and meet him.

It was already dark but, since the last rainfall which had annoyed the army so dreadfully, at Makhnovka, the weather had been continuously fine. The golden stars shone in the dark vault of heaven, the moon gleamed and shone on the roofs of Rosolovski. In the camp no one thought of sleeping. All were looking forward to the coming battle and preparing themselves for it by singing, according to old custom, soldiers' songs and promising themselves great happiness. The officers and the more distinguished guests were in the happiest mood. They had gathered round a large camp fire and were carousing to their heart's content.

"Speak on," they called to Zagloba, "What did you do when you were on the other side of the Dnieper? And how did you manage to get to Bar?"

Pan Zagloba emptied a goblet of mead and said:

"Sed jam nox humida coelo praecipitat
Suadentque sidera cadentia somnos
Sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros Incipiam." . .

My worthy sirs if I should relate to you all, from the beginning, and enter into details, ten nights would not be suffi-

cient to do it in, and, certainly, the mead would not hold out; for an old throat like an old wagon has to be greased. Enough, if I tell you that I went to Korsun, into the very camp of Khmyelnitski with the princess and have succeeded in leading her safely out of that hell."

"Jesus Maria! You must have enchanted them," cried Volodiyovski?

"Well, yes; I did bewitch them," answered Zagloba, "for I learned the black art in my young days from a witch in Asia, who fell in love with me and divulged to me all the mysteries of witchcraft; but I could not bewitch all of them for I found my master. Magicians and witches were swarming around Khmyelnitski. He has got so many devils in his service that he goes about among htem as if they were peasants. If he goes to sleep, a devil takes off his boots. Are his garments dusty, the devils beat them with their tails and he, when he is drunk, knocks the teeth down the throat of one or the other because, he says, You have served me badly.' "

The pious Longin crossed himself and said:

"The powers of hell are with him; with us the powers of heaven."

"The 'blacks' would have even betrayed to Bogdan who I was and whence I came; but I conjured them in such a manner that they kept their mouths shut. I feared also that Kmyelnitski would recognize me, for I was with him in Chigrin a year ago. We were twice at Dopula's together. There were also several other officers whom I recognized; but I had grown thin, my beard had grown to my waist, my hair fell over my shoulders, the disguise changed me so that no one knew me."

"Then you saw Khmyelnitski, and spoke to him?"

"Did I see Khmyelnitski? Exactly as I see you. Did he not send me as a spy to Podol that I might, on the way, read his manifesto to the peasants. He gave me a safe conduct as a protection against the hordes so that I could travel anywhere from Korsun without being molested. If I came across peasants or Nijovs I held the safe conduct under their noses and said, 'Smell that, children, and go to the devil.' I made them give me something good to eat and drink, everywhere I went, and I got it, too, and also a carriage and pair. And I was very glad of that, for I was thinking continually of the poor princess who needed a rest after her long fatigue. I tell you, sirs, before we reached Bar, she looked so fresh

again that the people in Bar could not take their eyes off her. There were many pretty girls there, for the nobility has collected there from all quarters; but in comparison with her they are like owls to a jay. People love her, too, and you would do so also if you should learn to know her."

"Certainly, it could not be otherwise," said the little Volodiyovski.

"But why did you go as far as Bar?" asked Migurski.

"Because I said to myself, that I would not halt until I had found a safe place. I did not trust the small castles because I was afraid that the rebellion would come to their doors. But, if it got as far as Bar it would knock its head against the wall for Andrew Poniatowski has garrisoned the walls very strongly and cares as much for Khmyelnitski as I would for an empty glass. What do you say, gentlemen, have I done well in remaining so far from the fight? Otherwise Bohun would certainly have followed me; and, if he had caught me, I tell you, sirs, he would have made me into mincemeat for his dogs. You do not know him, but I know him, the devil take him! I shall have no peace until he is hanged. May God grant him such a happy ending, Amen! He has certainly not inscribed anyone so deeply in his black-book as he has me. B-r-r-r. . . When I thing of it, a cold shudder runs over me. That is why I take a glass or two, more often than I did, although, by nature, I do not care to drink."

"What's that you say?" asked Pan Podbipyenta. "Why little brother, you drink like a well bucket."

"Do not look into the well, for you will see notl.ing wise (the reflection of a donkey); but let that pass. Well, when I set out with the safe conduct and the manifesto from Khmyelnitski, I did not find any great difficulty anywhere. When I reached Vinnits I found the company of Pan Akšak who is here in camp, but I did not lay off my beggar's disguise, because I feared the peasants; but I threw away the manifesto."

"There is a strap-maker who is called Suhak who acts as a spy for the Zaporojians and who sends news to Khmyelnitski. I sent the manifesto back by this man, but I wrote upon it such sentences that I am sure Khmyelnitski will flay him when he reads them. But, in Bar itself, I committed an indiscretion which nearly ruined me."

"What was it. Tell us?"

"I met some drunken soldiers, wild people, who heard me

call the princess 'Panna,' for I was no longer so cautious, as we were in the neighborhood of our friends. 'What!' said they, 'what kind of beggar is this. What an extraordintry boy to whom one says, Panna!' They looked at the princess. She was as beautiful as a picture. Give her to us they said. Well, the fight began. I put the poor girl into a corner, placed myself before her, and seized my sword. . . ."

"That is remarkable," interrupted Volodiyovski, "that you should carry a sword when you were dressed as a beggar."

"Eh," said Zagloba, "did I have a sword? Who told you that I had one? I had none. I seized one belonging to the soldiers that lay upon the table, for the quarrel was in the inn at Shypintsa. In the twinkling of an eye I had laid out two of my assailants. They seized their daggers. 'Halt,' I cried, 'Dogs, I am a nobleman.' They, however, cried, 'Stop, stop! advance guards are coming.' But we soon saw that it was not advance guards, but Panna Slavoshevska with her train, whom her son was accompanying with fifty horsemen. A young fellow. They stopped in front of the soldiers and I spoke to the lady: She was so moved that the flood-gates of her eyes were opened; she took the princess into her carriage, and we got to Bar. But do you think, sirs, that that was the end of it? Why. . . . "

Suddenly Slezinski interrupted the narrative.

"Look yonder sirs," said he, "is that the sunrise or what?"

"It cannot be," answered Skshetuski, "it is still too early in the day. That comes from Konstantinov."

"Look there, it is getting brighter. It must actually be a fire."

All faces became earnest. The story was forgotten; all jumped to their feet.

"The light of a fire! The light of a fire," several voices repeated.

"Kshyvonos is coming here from Poloma! Kshyvonos with his whole army. The advance guard has probably set fire to the town or the surrounding villages."

The trumpets gave the alarm quietly and at the same moment old Zatsvilikhovski appeared with other officers.

"Gentlemen," said he, "the scouts have brought news that the enemy is in sight. We must set out. To your regiments! To your regiments!"

The officers hastened as quickly as they could to their regiments, the servants put out the fires and soon complete dark-

ness reigned in the camp. But in the distance, in the direction of Konstantinov the sky became redder and redder until the stars were finally extinguished by the glow and again the trumpets sounded softly. The call to mount was sounded from the mouth piece. The indistinct masses of men and horses were set in motion. In the darkness was heard the tramping of horses, the measured tread of the foot soldiers, and, finally, the heavy rolling of Vurtsel's gun carriages. From time to time, the clatter of muskets or the sound of command was heard. It seemed ominous, uncanny to march thus under the shadow of the darkness to the sound of whispering voices, the clatter of swords, the gleam of weapons. The regiments moved along the road to Konstantinov and turned in the direction whence the fire glow came, that looked like a gigantic dragon or serpent creeping along in the darkness. But the glorious July night was coming to a close. In Rosolovtsa the cocks were beginning to crow and to call and answer each other all over the town. Rosolovtsa was only a mile from Konstantinov and, before the army in their slow march had made more than half of their way, a pale morning gleam arose behind the fire glow and filled with light the woods, the forests, the white strip of highway and the marching army, which had been hidden by the darkness. One could now see clearly men, horses and dense ranks of infantry. A cool morning wind was blowing, and waving the flags above the heads of the knights.

Vyershul's Tartars took the lead, then came Poniatowski's Cossacks, then the dragoons, Vurtzel's cannon, the infantry, and, in the rear, the hussars.

Zagloba rode beside Skshetuski, but he was bent over in his saddle. It was evident that he was filled with apprehension at the prospect of the approaching battle.

"Pan Skshetuski," he said gently, as though he feared some one was listening.

"What is it?"

"Will the hussars attack first?"

"You say you are an old soldier and you do not know that the hussars will be reserved till the battle is about to be decided; until the moment when the enemy puts forth their utmost strength."

"I know well, I know, but I wanted to assure myself of it."

They were silent awhile, then Zagloba, in a still lower voice asked, "Is it Kshyvonos with his whole army?"

"It is he."

"And how many men does he command?"

"Counting the 'blacks,' sixty thousand men."

"Oh, the devil," said Zagloba.

Skshetuski smiled.

"Do not think, sir, that I am afraid," whispered Zagloba, "but I have short breath and do not like a crowd. It makes me warm, and when it is warm I am a lost man. Yes, in a duel, then one can at least make use of craft but, here, what good will craft do? It is not the head but the hand that fights. Here, I am a fool compared with Longin. I have here in my belt the twelve gold pieces which the prince gave me. But, believe me, I would rather my body was somewhere else. . . . Fie, fie, I do not like these great battles. Plague take them!"

"Nothing will happen to you; take courage."

"Courage! That is just what I am afraid of, that my courage may conquer my common-sense. I am too hot-headed and I've already had a bad omen. As we sat by the watch fire, two stars fell from heaven. Who can tell? Perhaps one of them is mine?"

"For your good deeds, God will reward you and keep you safe and sound."

"If he only does not make out my pay too soon."

"Why did you not stay with the baggage wagons?"

"I thought I would be safer with the army."

"So you are. You will see; it will not be much. We are accustomed to it, and custom is second nature."

"See, here we are at the Sluch and the Vishova Pond."

Indeed the waters of the Vishova Stav separated from the Sluch by a long dike shone from the distance; the whole army halted along the line.

"All ready?" asked Zagloba.

"The prince is going to form the ranks," answered Skshetuski.

"I do not like a crowd, I tell you, I do not like a crowd."

"The hussars to the right wing," sounded the voice of the aid whom the prince had sent to Skshetuski.

It was bright daylight. The glow of the fire had paled in the light of the rising sun. Its golden beams played on the tips of the hussars' lances and looked as though a thousand flames were gleaming above the heads of the knights. When the ranks were formed, the army, no longer hidden, sang in chorus, "Hail, O ye portals of salvation!"

The mighty sound resounded across the dewy fields, was thrown back by the pine forests, and its echo rose to heaven. At length on the opposite bank of the ditch, a black swarm of Cossacks appeared, stretching as far as the eye could reach. Regiment after regiment of Zaporojians on horseback armed with long lances; the infantry with muskets, and the mass of the peasantry with scythes, flails and hay forks in their hands. Behind them lay in the mist the gigantic baggage train exactly like a town in motion. The creaking of thousands of carriages and the neighing of horses reached even the ears of the prince's soldiers. The Cossacks however moved on without their accustomed noise, and without shouting, on the other bank of the ditch. The two opposing powers observed each other for a long time in silence.

Zagloba, who kept close to Skshetuski, looked at this sea of men, and murmured:

"Jesus Christ! Why hast thou created such a number of these ragamuffins!

"That must be Khymelnitski himself with the "blacks" and their lice. Is not that simple madness. Tell me. They will cover us with their caps. It was formerly so beautiful in the Ukraine! How they surge on and on. May the devil take them. May they be surged into hell! And all those who are against us. May they die of the rot."

"Do not curse, it is Sunday."

"Truly, to-day is Sunday. It will be better to think about God. Pater Noster, qui est in coelis. . . . One cannot expect any respect from this pack. . . . Sanctificetur nomen tuum. . . . What will happen in this ditch! Adveniat regnum tuum. . . . My breath is going. . . . Fiat voluntas tua. . . . May you die, you man killers. Look over there, what is that?"

A division of some hundred men had separated from the black mass and were moving in disorder towards the moat.

"That is the artillery," said Skshetuski. "Soon our men will go to meet them."

"Will the battle begin then?"

"As certain as God is in heaven.' '

"May the devil take them. . . . " Zagloba's dissatisfaction here, knew no bounds. "And you are looking at it just as if it was a theatre in Lent," cried he angrily to Skshetuski, "not as if your life was in danger."

"As I told you, we are accustomed to it."

"And are you going forward also to the carnage?"

"It is not suitable for the knights of high rank to fight hand to hand with such an enemy, and no one does it who values his dignity. But in these times, one does not think of his dignity.

"Ours are already going forward," cried Zagloba as he saw a long line of Volodiyovski's dragoons galloping toward the moat.

Some volunteers from each regiment followed him, among others, the red Vyershul, Kushel, Poniatovski, and the two Karvishovs and, from the hussars, Longin Podbipyenta.

The space between the two divisions became considerably less.

"You'll witness some fine things," said Skshetuski to Zagloba. "Observe particularly Volodiyovski and Longin—those are famous knights! Do you see them?"

"Certainly I do."

"Then look, you too will long for it!"

CHAPTER XV.

But when the fighters had come closer to one another, they reined in their horses and began to attack each other with words.

"Come on! Come on! We shall soon feed the dogs on your carrion," cried the prince's soldiers.

"Yours is not good enough for the dogs!"

"You will rot in this fish pond, contemptible knaves!"

"Whoever is ordained to rot here will do so. The fish will immediately eat you."

"To the dung heap with your pitch forks, peasant fools! They suit you better than the sword does."

"If we are common peasants our sons will be nobles for they will be brought into the world by your daughters."

A Cossack, evidently from the Dnieper country, stepped forward and held his hands to his mouth and cried in a powerful voice:

"The prince has two nieces. Tell him to send them to Kshyvonos."

Volodiyovski became almost blind with rage when he heard this insult and he dashed towards the Zaporojians on his horse.

Skshetuski recognized him in the distance, from where he stood, at the right wing of the hussars and cried to Zagloba:

"Look; Look! Volodiyovski is runing, Volodiyovski is running. There—there!"

"I see," cried Zagloba, "he has already reached them. Now they are struggling, one, two, it is all over with them. I see distinctly. Ho, ho, that is a fighter, may the devil catch me!"

At the second blow, the insulting fellow had been struck to the ground like lightning. His head was turned to his own companions, as if for an evil omen.

A second sprang forward, dressed in a red Kontush that he had stolen from a nobleman. He attacked Volodiyovski from the side, but his horse stumbled just at the moment

when he was going to strike a blow. Volodiyovski turned towards him and now could be recognized the master. He moved his hand with an easy, hardly perceptible motion and the sword of the Zaporojian flew into the air. Volodiyovski grabbed him bv the neck and dragged him and his horse over alongside his own horse.

"Brothers, save me," cried the prisoner, but the man did not offer any resistance for he knew that, should he attempt it, he would be pierced by the sword, he put spurs to his horse in order to escape—and so Volodiyovski dragged him off, as a wolf might drag a kid.

At this sight, some tens of warriors began the attack on either side. There was hardly room for more men beside the wide moat. They attacked each other in single combat, man struggled with man, horse with horse, sword with sword and it was a wonderful sight, this row of men in single combat, upon which both armies gazed with eager eyes and prophesied through their success the farther consequences of the war. The morning sun lighted up the combatants, and the air was so clear that one could almost distinguish the faces on both sides.

In the distance one might have thought it was a tournament or a pastime; but from time to time a corpse fell into the gleaming surface of the water that splashed in golden sparks and then formed little waves which moved farther and farther away.

The courage and eagerness for war increased in both armies when they saw the bravery of their knights. They each sent wishes and good luck to their own side. Suddenly, Skshetuski clapped his hands, so that his gauntlet rang, and cried:

"Vyershul is lost! he and his horse have fallen! Look! he has fallen to the ground, he was sitting on that white one."

But Vyershul was not lost although he had fallen, together with his horse, for the gigantic Pulyan, a former Cossack in Prince Yeremy's army and to-day second in comand to Kshyvonos had overthrown him. He was a renowned skirmisher and always took part in a fight. He was so strong that he could break two horseshoes at once, with the greatest ease; and was considered invincible in single combat. After he had overthrown Vyershul he sprang through the crowd, towards the brave officer Korosklakhisits and cut him fearfully close to the saddle; the rest drew back frightened. When Longin saw this he turned his Lithuanian mare towards Pulyan.

"You will find your fate," cried Pulyan, looking at the venturesome man.

"What is to be done?" said Longin and raised his sword for the stroke.

He, however, had not his cowl-trencher with him for he had reserved it for a higher purpose than single combat. He had left it in the care of a servant who had remained behind with the rear guard. He had only a slender sword with a bluish blade ornamented with gold tracery. Pulyan stood the first blow, although he saw that he had to deal with a remarkable opponent and his sword trembled in his hand; but he stood the second, and the third stroke. Then, however, whether it was that he recognized the greater ability of his opponent or that he wished to show off his enormous strength before his friends and his enemies, or whether, being forced to the edge of the ditch, he feared to be pushed into the water by Longin's enormous steed—whatever was the motive, after he had received the last blow he closed with his assailant and put his powerful arm around him, and they hugged each other like two bears who are contending for a female. They intertwined like two fir trees growing from a single trunk, whose branches blend and form a single tree.

Everyone held his breath and looked in silence at the combat of these two warriors, each of whom was considered by his own men to be the more powerful wrestler. They appeared to have been transformed into one man, for they remained for a long time immovable; but their faces grew red and it was only by the veins which swelled out on their foreheads and by the bowed backs like bows that one could recognize the enormous, superhuman strength of the arms that were holding each other in this iron embrace.

Finally, both began to gasp; but, gradually, Longin's face became redder and the face of the Cossack leader assumed a blue tint. Only a little while longer. The impatience of the onlookers increased. Finally, a dull, muffled tone broke the silence.

"Let go."

"No, little brother,' 'answered the other voice.

A moment longer, then there was a horrible rattling, a sigh rose in the air, as though it came from beneath the earth; a stream of blood flowed from Pulyan's mouth and his head fell on his shoulder. Longin lifted him out of the saddle and, before the onlookers had time to reflect on what

THE FIGHT BEGAN ALONG THE WHOLE LINE.

With Fire and Sword.

had happened, he threw him across his own horse and galloped back to his men.

"Viva!" shouted Vishnyovyetski's soldiers.

"Death to him!" answered the Zaporojians.

The death of their leader did not throw the Zaporojians into confusion. They attacked their opponents only the more fiercely. Now began the fight between the masses; a fight that was all the more furious on account of the space in which they had to fight and, in spite of their courage, the Cossacks would have been at the mercy of the better military training of their opponents, if a trumpet blast fom Kshyvonos' camp had not recalled them.

They at once returned to their camp. Their opponents remained a moment on the spot in order to show that they were the victors and then returned to their own quarters. The ditch was deserted. There only remained behind dead bodies of men and horses, as a prophecy of that which was to happen. This path of death lay dark and gloomy between the two armies. A light wind ruffled the smooth surface of the lake and moaned complainingly through the foliage of the willows which stood here and there along the banks of the lake.

Meanwhile Kshyvonos' regiments advanced like innumerable flocks of crows and ravens. In the first rank were the "blacks," then the disciplined Zaporojian infantry, the cavalry, the Tartar volunteers, the Cossack artillery, and all without any special order. One regiment crowded another; they advanced head over heels, for they wished by force of numbers to storm the moat, and then to turn the water into it and drown the prince's army. The wild Kshyvonos believed in fists and swords; not in the art of war. Therefore he pushed forward with all his might to the attack, and commanded the hindmost regiments to press forward on the others so that they might be forced to advance, even against their will. The cannon balls hissed and plashed in the water like strange water fowl, without however doing any harm to the prince's forces who were stationed at some distance on the other side of the lake, in the form of a chess board. The flood of men streamed across the ditch and went steadily forward; a portion of them had reached the river and sought to find means of crossing it but, as they could not do so, they returned to the dikè, and were packed so closely that, as Osinski expressed it later, one could have ridden over

their heads; and they covered the whole dike so that not an inch of room was to be seen.

Yeremy was looking on from the high bank. He knitted his brows and shot fiery glances at the crowd. When he saw the disorder and the wild crowding of Kshyvonos' regiments, he said to Colonel Makhnitski:

"How the peasants go for the enemy, leaving all military art out of consideration. They look as if they were going hunting, but will not catch us."

Meanwhile, however, as if to challenge his words, they had reached half way to the ditch and they halted, astonished and uneasy, at the inaction of the prince's army. But, just at this moment, there was a movement in the army; and they drew back and left a broad empty semicircle, which was to be the field of battle.

Then Korytski's infantry separated in two divisions and exposed Vurtzel's cannon which was directed towards the ditch and in the angle formed by the river and the ditch gleamed among the reeds on the bank, the muskets of the Germans under Osinski.

It was at once evident to a soldier, upon which side the victory must incline, and only a mad leader of the bands, like Kshyvonos would undertake a battle under such circumstances. With all the strength he possessed he could not have forced a passage if Vishnyovyetski had desired to hinder him.

But the prince had intentionally resolved to let a portion of his forces cross the ditch, in order to surround them and destroy them. The great leader made use of the blindness of his opponent, who seemed to pay no attention to the fact that if his own men wished to fight on the other bank he would not be able to hasten to their assistance except across a very narrow path, on which it would be impossible to lead any considerable number of troops. Therefore men experienced in war beheld with astonishment this move of Kshyvonos whom nothing obliged to take this mad step.

Nothing but ambition and thirst for blood, obliged him. The Cossack leader had learned that Khymelnitski was anxious about the result of the battle with Yeremy, in spite of the superiority of the forces that Kshyvonos commanded and that he was coming with his forces to their assistance. Kshyvonos had received orders not to undertake a battle but, just for that reason, he resolved to fight one, and made all the more haste to do so.

After he had taken Polonne, he had acquired a taste for bloodshed and wished to carry on his work alone. This was why he was in such a hurry. Even if he did sacrifice half his men, what did that matter? With what remained, he could overpower the small forces of the prince and cut them down to the last man. He would take Yeremy's head as a present to Khmyelnitski.

Meanwhile, the mass of the "blacks" had reached the end of the dike which they passed, and flooded the semicircle which Yeremy's army had cleared. But, at this moment, Osinki's concealed infantry fired on their flank. A long stream of smoke came from Vurtsel's cannon, the earth shook with thunder and the fight began along the whole line.

Smoke hid the bank of the Sluch, the pond, dike and the battlefield itself; so that one could see nothing; only at times the red uniforms of the dragoons gleamed through the mist, or the crests of the helmets, amid the surging terrible crowd. All the bells in the town were ringing and their tones mingled with the heavy roar of the cannon. Fresh regiments poured from the camp towards the ditch.

Those, however, who had crossed it and reached the other side of the lake stretched out in a moment and formed a long line which attacked the prince's forces in a fury of rage. The battle was raging from one end of the lake to the bend of the river and to the marshy meadowlands which were under water this wet summer. The "blacks" and the Nijs must conquer or die; for they had at their backs the water, towards which the attack of the infantry and of the prince's cavalry crowded them.

As the hussars drove forward, Zagloba, in spite of his short breath and his dislike for crowds, rode with the rest; for he could not do otherwise unless he wished to expose himself to the danger of being trampled under foot. He dashed forward, therefore, with his eyes closed, and thoughts flew through his head lightning-like, the thought, "artifice is of no use, it is of no use! The fool wins, the wise man loses!" Then he was seized with a rage against war, against the Cossacks, against the hussars, against everything in the world. He began to curse—and pray. The wind whistled in his ears, stopped his breath. Suddenly, his horse stumbled against something. He noticed the resistance, opened his eyes, and what did he see? Scythes, swords, flails, a mass of flushed faces, eyes, moustaches. . . . all was indistinct.

He did not know to whom they belonged; they were all trembling, twitching, raging. He was seized with a terrible hatred for the enemy because they had not all gone to the devil; because they just appeared under his eyes and obliged him to fight. "Whether you wish it or not, you shall have it," and he began to hack round him on all sides. Now, he cut the air with his sword, now he felt that it cut through something soft. At the same time he was aware that he yet lived; that gave him unusual courage. "Fight! Kill!" he bellowed like a bison. Presently the angry faces disappeared from his sight and he saw a crowd of backs, caps and the noise nearly deafened him.

"They are retreating," suddenly came to his mind, "yes, so it is."

Then he grew perfectly furious.

"Thieves," he cried, "do you dare oppose the nobles, and he dashed among the fugitives, passed many of them, mingled among the dense crowd and began, with great presence of mind, to set to work. Meanwhile, his companions had forced the Nij people towards the bank of the Sluch, which was thickly grown with trees, and had driven them along the bank to the ditch without taking one of them prisoner. They had no time for that.

Suddenly Zagloba remarked that his horse was quaking under him and, at the same moment, some heavy object fell on him and covered his entire head, so that it grew perfectly dark around him.

"Help!" cried he, digging his heels into his horse, but the horse only grunted beneath the weight of his rider and remained perfectly still.

Zagloba heard a noise, the cries of the cavalry dashing past him, then the storm seemed to be lulled and all was silent.

Again thoughts darted through his mind, with the speed of a Tartar arrow, "What is it? What has happened? Jesus Maria! I have been made prisoner."

Great drops of sweat started out on his forehead. Evidently, his head had been wrapped up; just as he had once wrapped up Bohun's. The weight that he felt on his arm was the hand of a Cossack, but why did they not take him away? Why did they not kill him? Why did he remain standing in one spot?

"Let go, villain," he cried in a choked voice.

All was silent.

"Let go villain, I will give you your life."

There was no answer.

Once more Zagloba dug his spurs into his horse, but again without any result. The frightened animal spread his legs apart and stood more firmly on the same spot.

Then the unhappy horseman become furiously angry. He pulled his knife from the sheath which hung at his belt and made several thrusts in the air around him.

But the dagger cut only the air.

Then Zagloba dragged with both hands at the cloth that was over his head, and tore it away in a moment.

"What does it mean?"

The Cossacks are not there. The place around him is deserted. Only, in the distance, could be seen through the smoke the red uniform of Volodiyovski's dragoons, as they dash along; and, a hundred paces beyond them, the armor of the hussars who were following those that remained and were forcing them from the field into the water. But at Zagloba's feet lay the regimental colors of the Zaporojians. Evidently the fleeing Cossacks had thrown them away so that the staff struck Zagloba's shoulder, and the bunting coiled about his head. When he saw this and understood it clearly Zagloba came to himself again.

"Aha!" he said, "have I not captured the flag? I really did take it. If justice is not defeated in this battle, I am sure of a reward in any case. Oh, you peasant fools, it was fortunate for you that my horse stumbled. I did not know myself when I believed that I could accomplish more with cunning than with courage. I can be of some better use in the army than in eating biscuits. Oh, my God, there comes a band of Cossacks! Not this way, you dogs, not this way! May the wolves devour the horses—fight! kill!"

A fresh band of Cossacks were indeed coming towards Zagloba, and bellowing with unearthly voices; and close at their heels were Poniatovski's heavy cavalry. Zagloba would certainly have met his death beneath the hoofs of their horses, if Skshetuski's hussars, having forced the fugitives into the water and drowned them, had not just then returned in order to attack the approaching divisions on both flanks. When the Zaporojians saw them, they plunged into the water to escape the sword, and found their death in the marshes and deep lagoons. Others who had sunk to their

knees and were entreating for mercy, died from sword thrusts. A horrible slaughter ensued; most horrible in the dike. All the divisions which had succeeded in reaching the other side had been destroyed in the semicircle which the Prince's army had formed. Those who had not yet crossed, fell beneath the continuous fire of Vurtzel's cannon and the volleys of the German infantry. They could neither advance nor retreat for Kshyvonos was continually sending forward fresh regiments who crowded those before them and thus blocked the only way for flight. One might have thought that Kshyvonos had made a vow to drive his own people to destruction. They crowded each other, stifled each other, fell over one another, sprang on all sides into the water and were drowned. On one end was a black crowd of fugitives, on the other an advancing crowd. In the midst of mounds and piles of corpses, groans, cries, unearthly sounds, terror, madness, chaos. The whole lake was filled with bodies of men and horses. The water overflowed the banks.

From time to time the cannon were silent. Then, from the embankment, as from the mouth of a cannon, crowds of Zaporojians and of peasants poured forth and ran in all directions and right on the swords of the cavalry who were charging towards them. Vurtsel began his game afresh, and covered the embankment with a hail of of iron and lead, thus repulsing the troops that were hastening to the rescue. Whole hours passed in this bloody struggle. Kshyvonos raged and foamed, but did not count the battle lost as yet, and drove thousands of his men into the jaws of death.

On the other bank stood Yeremy in his silver armor, erect on his horse on the high hill which in those days was called Kruja Mogila—and looked down.

His face was peaceful; his eyes took in the whole dike; the lake, the banks, the smoky distance, the banks of the Sluch, and wandered in the direction where wrapped in blue mist, stood the huge camp train of Kshyvonos. The eyes of the prince did not move from the crowd of wagons. Presently he turned to the fat Voyevoda of Kiev and said:

"We will not take the tabor to-day."

"What? Your Highness wishes to? —"

"Time passes rapidly; it is too late. The evening is almost here."

The battle from the time that the skirmishers had begun it, through Kshyvonos obstinacy, had lasted so long that the

sun had had time to travel through the whole arch of heaven and was now about to set. Light summer clouds that betokened a clear day were scattered like white fleeces over the sky, and began to be tinged with red, and to disappear in masses from the horizon. The stream of Cossacks towards the embankment gradually ceased and the regiments who had already reached it fled in fright and disorder.

The battle had come to an end because the angry crowds had finally attacked Kshyvonos, howling in despair and rage:

"Traitor! You are destroying us. Bloodhound, we ourselves will bind and give you over to Yeremy for having sold our lives thus. Death to you, not to us!"

"To-morrow I will give you the prince and his whole army or I will die myself," answered Kshyvonos.

But this expected morrow had yet to come, and the present day was a day of defeat, of calamity. Many thousands of the bravest Nij Cossacks, not counting the peasantry, lay stretched on the field of battle or were drowned in the pond or in the river. Nearly two thousand were taken prisoners. Fourteen colonels had fallen, a hundred captains, esauls, and other leaders. The second in command to Kshyvonos, Pulyan, had fallen into the hands of the enemy alive, but with his ribs broken.

"To-morrow we will kill them all," repeated Kshyvonos. "I will take neither gorzalka nor food in my mouth till that time comes."

Meanwhile, in the opposite camp, the captured flags were being laid at the feet of the terrible prince. Each soldier who had taken one threw it down, so that there was a whole heap of them, as many as forty; and as it came to Zagloba's turn he threw his down with such force and such a noise that the pole broke. When the prince saw this, he detained him and asked:

"Did you capture this standard with you own hands?"

"At your service, your Excellency."

"I see then that you are not only Ulysses but also Achilles."

"I am a common warrior, but I serve under Alexander of Macedon."

"As you receive no pay, the treasurer shall give you two hundred gold pieces for your praiseworthy act."

Zagloba clasped the prince's knees and said:

"Your Highness, this favor is greater than my courage, which prefers to hide itself behind its own modesty."

A hardly perceptible smile played over Skshetuski's dark face, but the knight was silent and never told any one, either the Prince or any of the rest, about Zagloba's uneasiness before the battle. But Zagloba strode away with such a determined air that the soldiers of the other regiments, as they saw him, pointed him out to their comrades and said:

"He is the one who did the best service to-day."

Night had come. On both sides of the river and of the lake, a thousand watch fires flamed and clouds of smoke rose like columns in the sky. The weary soldiers refreshed themselves with food and gorzalka or, through the recital of the day's deeds, inspired themselves with courage for the battle on the following day. The most talkative of all was Zagloba, who was glorifying himself for what he had done, and on account of what he might have done if his horse had not stumbled.

"I tell you, sirs," he said, turning to the prince's officers and to the noblemen of Tyshkyevich's company. "Great battles are nothing to me. I have witnessed many of them in Moldavia and in Turkey. If I sometimes held back it was because I feared not the enemy, who would fear the peasants! —but my own ardor, which was apt to lead me too far."

"So it led you too far?"

"How did it? Ask Pan Skshetuski. As soon as I saw Pan Vyershul fall from his horse, I wanted immediately to rush to his assistance. My comrades held me back with difficulty."

"That is true," said Skshetuski. "We had to hold you by the arm."

"But," interrupted Karvich, "where is Vyershul?"

"He is already gone forward with the scouts; he doesn't know what rest is."

"Observe, gentlemen," said Zagloba, annoyed at having his story interrupted, "how I captured this flag. . . . "

"Then Vyershul is not wounded," asked Karvich again.

"It is not the first that I have taken in my life, but no other cost me so much trouble."

"He is not wounded, but bruised," answered Azulevich, a Tartar, . . . "and drank water; for he fell head foremost into the pond."

"I am only surprised that the fish did not die," said Zagloba angrily, "for such a fiery head must have made the water boil."

"But he is a great knight!"

"Not such a great warrior, a Pulyan (half a john) was enough for him."

"Pshaw! One cannot talk in peace to these men. You might have learned from me how to capture an enemy's flag."

Young Pan Aksak, who at this moment approached the camp fire, interrupted his speech.

"I bring news," he said, with his ringing boyish voice.

"The nurse has not washed his swaddling clothes; the cat has drunk his milk and broken the saucer," grunted Zagloba.

But Pan Aksak did not trouble himself about these reflections on his youth, and said:

"They are roasting Pulyan at the fire. . . . "

"Then the dogs will have roast meat, interrupted Zagloba.

"And he is making confessions. The negotiations are broken off. The Lord of Bratslav is beside himself. Khmyelnitski is coming to the help of Kshyvonos with his whole army."

"Khmyel! What Khmyel?[1] Who cares anything for Khmyel here. We laugh at Khmyel," gabbled Zagloba, letting his eyes wander threateningly and proudly over the company.

"So Khmyel is coming! But Kshyvonos did not wait for him and therefore lost the battle." . . . .

"The fool has played and played till he has lost."

"Six thousand Cossacks are in Makhnovkā already. Bohun is at their head."

"Who? Who?" asked Zagloba with a complete change of tone.

"Bohun!"

"Impossible!"

"So Pulyan confesses."

"There you have the confirmation," cried Zagloba plaintively. "Will they be here soon?"

"In three days. As they are coming to begin a battle, however, they will not hurry too much, so as not to exhaust the horses."

"But I will hurry," grunted Zagloba. "Oh, Angel of God, save me from this rascal! I would willingly give back my captured flag if this villain would only break his neck before he reached here. I hope that we shall not have to wait here long. We have shown Kshyvonos what we can do and now we ought to take a little rest. I hate this Bohun so intensely, that I cannot hear his devilish name without horror. I did

[1] Khmyel—hops.

a fine thing! Why could I not have remained in Bar? The devil brought me here. . . . . "

"Do not be afraid," whispered Skshetuski to him, "it is a shame. There is no danger with us."

"No danger? You do not know him. Perhaps he is already creeping between the watch-fires to attack us." Here Zagloba looked around him uneasily. "And he is just as eager to catch you as to catch me."

"God grant that I may meet him!" said Skshetuski.

"If that is a favor, I would rather not experience it. As a Christian, I will willingly forgive him all injuries; but only on one condition, that he shall he hanged two days before hand. I am not afraid of him, but you cannot imagine what an extreme disgust takes possession of me. I like to know with whom I have to deal. With a nobleman, as with a nobleman; with a peasant, as with a peasant; but he is the very devil himself, with whom one does not know how to act. I dared to do a great many things to him; but what eyes he made at me when I tied up his head! I cannot begin to describe it to you. I shall think of him even at the hour of my death. I do not want to wake the devil when he is asleep; once is enough for me. I will only tell you one thing, that you are ungrateful and do not trouble yourself about a poor fellow like me. . . . . "

"Why, how's that?"

"Because," said Zagloba, pulling the knight away from the watch fire, "you give yourself up to your warlike moods and your imaginations and fight and fight; while she is wasting away in tears day by day and is waiting in vain for your answer. No other man would act like that. He would have sent me to her long ago if he really had true love in his heart and compassion for her anxiety."

"Then do you think of going back to Bar?"

"I would like to go to-day, for I am sorry for her."

Pan Yan raised his eyes, full of longing, to the stars; and said to Zagloba:

"Do not blame me for inconstancy. God is my witness that I never put a morsel of bread in my mouth, never allow my tired body any rest, without thinking of her; and no one can be more constantly in my thoughts than she is. I did not send you with an answer, for the simple reason that I expected to go there myself; to give myself up to my love and to unite myself to her forever, without delay. There is not

in the whole world a pair of wings such as I would desire to have, in order to fly to my little one."

"Why do you not fly?"

"Because it would not be honorable to go before the battle takes place. I am a soldier and a nobleman, and must consider my honor. . . "

"But to-day is after the battle, ergo . . . we can go away, even this very moment."

Pan Yan sighed.

"To-morrow we will attack Kshyvonos."

"See here, I do not understand this. You have beaten young Kshyvonos, when along comes old Kshyvonos. Now you will beat old Kshyvonos, and then comes young . . . young . . . I will not open my mouth to speak the word, Bohun. Then you will beat him, and then comes Khmyelnitski. What the devil! If it goes on like this much longer, you had better unite with Pan Podbipyenta. There would be a fool with his chastity, plus Pan Skshetuski, in sum, two fools with chastity. Give us peace, sir, by God! I will be the first to tamper with the princess and when Pan Andrey Pototski spies her, he distends his nostrils and neighs like a horse. Pshaw! The devil! If a young boy, who had never fought a battle and wished to earn his first fame, said that to me, I might understand it; but not you who have drunk your blood like a wolf and, as is related, killed a devilish dragon or man-eater at Makhnovka. I swear by this heavenly moon, you are not sincere; or you have got so thirsty for blood that you prefer it to your bride."

Skshetuski looked up involuntarily at the moon, which was sailing like a silver boat in the high starry heavens above the camp.

"You are mistaken," he said, after a pause, "I have no pleasure in blood and I am not anxious for glory, but it does not become me to leave my comrades in a dire strait, in which the regiment, without exception, must do battle. Knightly honor demands it; it is a sacred matter. As regards the war, however, it will certainly continue, for the rebel 'blacks' have increased enormously. Meanwhile if Khmyelnitski comes to Kshyvonos' assistance, there will be an interruption. We shall either conquer Kshyvonos to-morrow or we shall not. If we conquer him, he will, with God's help be disciplined; and then we shall have to move into a more peaceful country, in order to get a little breath. Two moons have passed and we

have not slept or eaten; but fight, fight; no roof over our heads day or night and exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather. The prince is a great commander, but he is also cautious. He will not attack Khmyelnitski with a few thousand men against hundreds of thousands. I know also that he is going to march to Zbaraj. There he will gather new forces, collect fresh soldiers, the nobility will come to him from all over the Commonwealth and only then shall we fight a decisive battle. To-morrow, then, will be the last day of work; and the day after to-morrow I can go with you to Bar with a clean conscience, and I will tell you this for your comfort, that Bohun cannot be here to-morrow to take part in the battle. But should he do so, I hope that his peasant's star will pale not only beside that of the prince but also beside mine."

"He is Beelzebub himself. I told you I did not like crowds, but he is worse than a crowd. Although, I repeat, I do not feel fear for him so much as an aversion, which I cannot overcome; but, well, no more of that! To-morrow we will tan the peasant's hides and then, hurrah, to Bar! Oh, how those pretty eyes will laugh at sight of you! Oh, how those little cheeks will glow! I must tell you, sir, that I am longing to see her too, for I love her as a father, and is it any wonder? *Legitime natos*, I have none. My property is far away; in Turkey, where the heathen agents have stolen everything from me. I live like an orphan in the world and, in my old age, I shall be obliged to go to Pan Podbipyenta, to his home at Myshykishek."

"That shall not be. Do not let your head ache on that account. For what you have done for us I can never show enough gratitude."

The conversation was here interrupted by an officer who, asked as he rode by:

"Who stands there?"

"Vyershul," cried Skshetuski, recognizing his voice. "Do you come from the scouting party?"

"Yes, and now have just come from the prince."

"What news is there?"

"To-morrow there is to be a battle. The enemy is working on the embankment, building bridges across the Sluch, and insists on coming over to us."

"And what did the prince say to that?"

"The prince says, 'good.'"

"Nothing more?"

"Nothing. He gave orders that they should not be hindered, and the axes are working over there. They will work until to-morrow."

"Did you get any news?"

"I took seven prisoners. They all said that they had heard that Khmyelnitski was advancing; that he was not far away."

"What a night!"

"Bright as day. How do you feel after your fall?"

"My bones ache. I will just go and thank our Hercules, and then I will go to sleep, for I am tired. If one could only sleep two hours. Good night."

"Good night!"

"You go, too," said Pan Skshetuski, "it is getting late and to-morrow we shall have to work."

"And the day after to-morrow we shall ride away," Zagloba reminded him.

They moved away, said the Paternoster, and lay down beside the watch-fire. Presently the fires one by one went out. The camp was wrapped in darkness. Only the silver beams of the moon shone down and showed fresh groups of sleepers. The silence was broken only by loud snoring and by the calls of the sentries who guarded the camp.

But sleep did not long hold the heavy lids of the soldiers. The first ray of morning had hardly chased the shadows of night when, on all sides of the camp, the trumpets sounded the revielle.

An hour later, the prince, to the great astonishment of his knights, retreated with all his forces.

CHAPTER XVI.

But the retreat was that of a lion who wants room for a spring. The prince intentionally allowed Kshyvonos to advance in order to prepare for him a more complete defeat. In the beginning of the battle, he whipped his horse and pretended he was taking to flight, and when the Nij and the "blacks" saw that, they broke their ranks in order to follow him and surround him; but the prince suddenly turned round and attacked him with his whole cavalry, in such an overwhelming manner, that they were unable to offer a moment's resistance. They were chased for a mile beyond to the crossing, then beyond the bridge, dike, and to within half a mile of the rear-train. They were hewn down without mercy, and the hero of this day was the sixteen year old Pan Aksak, who made the first attack and inspired the first panic. Only with such experienced soldiers, old and experienced, could the prince have dared to employ such craft, and to feign fight. In any other army, it might really have changed into a flight. But this second day ended with a still more heavy defeat for Kshyvonos. All the field artillery were taken, many standards, among them many royal flags, which the Zaporojians had plundered at Korsun. If Korytski's infantry, Osinski's cavalry, and Vurtsel's cannon had been able to keep up with the cavalry, they would have taken the camp with one stroke; but, before they arrived there, it was night and the enemy had already moved to a considerable distance; so it was impossible to overtake them. Zatsvilikhovski, meanwhile, captured half the camp and an enormous supply of weapons and rations. The "blacks" seized Kshyvonos twice, in order to take him to the prince; and he barely succeeded in escaping from their hands by a promise to return without delay to Khmyelnitski. He fled, therefore, with the remaining half of his camp-train; decimated, beaten, reduced to despair, and did not halt until he reached Makhonovka. When he arrived here, Khmyelnitski, in his first moment of anger, commanded that Kshyvonos should be chained to a cannon.

It was not until his first anger had passed that the Zaporojian hetman remembered that the unfortunate Kshyvonos had flooded the whole of Volhynia with blood; that he had taken Polonne; had sent a thousand noble souls into the other world; had left their bodies without burial and had everywhere been victorious, until he met with Yeremy. In consideration of these services, the Zaporojian hetman took pity on him and commanded that he should not only be released from the cannon, but he placed him again in command, and sent him to Podol to commit new slaughter and booty.

During this time, the prince gave his men notice that they might take the long-wished for rest. During the last battle, they had experienced considerable losses, especially in the attack of the cavalry on the baggage camp, behind which the Cossacks defended themselves obstinately and adroitly. Five hundred men had fallen in this attack. Colonel Mokrski was very severely wounded and shortly after gave up the ghost. Pan Kushel, also, had a shot wound, but it was not dangerous. Palanovski and young Aksak were also wounded, and Zagloba, who had become accustomed to the crowd, and had valiantly held his ground with the rest, had been hit three times with a flail and was suffering from backache so that he could hardly move, and lay as if he were dead in a small wagon of Skshetuski's.

Thus had fate thwarted their plan of travelling to Bar, for they could not get away; and, more particularly, as the prince had sent Skshetuski at the head of several companies to Laslav, to suppress the swarms of "blacks" that were gathered there. The knight went off without saying a word about Bar to the prince; and for five days he burned and slaughtered and killed until the whole region was cleaned out.

At last his men were exhausted from uninterrupted fighting, from the long marches, assaults, and watching, and he resolved to return to the prince, whom, he had heard, was going to Tarnopol.

The night before his return, Skshetuski halted in Sukhojints on the banks of the Khomo; stationed his companies in the village and took up his own quarters for the night in a peasant's cabin; and, as it was very late and he was exhausted from his labors, he soon fell asleep and slept like a stone the whole night through.

Next morning, before he was fully awake, he began to dream and to see visions; strange pictures passed before the

eyes of his soul. First it seemed to him as though he were in Lubni; as though he had never left it; as though he were sleeping in his room in the armory and as though Jendzian, as usual in the morning, was setting out his clothes and making preparations for his master when he should awake.

Gradually, however, daylight began to dissipate his dreams; he came to the consciousness that he was in Sukhojints, not in Lubni—the form of the boy alone did not vanish and Skshetuski saw him still sitting at the window in a wooden chair, busied in oiling the straps of the armor which had become dry and stiff from the heat.

He still thought that a vision of sleep haunted him, and therefore he shut his eyes again; presently he opened them, but Jendzian still sat at the window.

"Jendzian," cried Skshetuski, "is it you or your ghost?"

The boy, startled by the sudden cry, let the armor fall with a clatter upon the ground, raised his hands and said:

"For God's sake, sir, why do you speak so? What are you thinking of, a ghost? It is I, myself, safe and sound."

"And have you come back?"

"Did you not drive me away?"

"Come here to me, that I may embrace you."

The young boy hastened to his master and clasped his knees. Skshetuski kissed him on the forehead, full of joy and repeated:

"You're alive! You're alive!"

"Oh, my master, I cannot speak for joy that I now see you in perfect health. . . . For God's sake, but you cried so, sir, that I let the breastplate fall. The straps got stiff. They say you had no easy task. Praised by Thou, O God! Praised be Thou. . . . Oh, my beloved master!"

"When did you come?"

"This very night."

"And why did you not wake me?"

"Why should I wake you? I came here in the morning, in order to fetch the things."

"Where did you come from?"

"From Hushck."

"What did you hear there? How did you get along? Speak! Tell me!"

"Well, sir, the Cossacks came to Hushch to plunder the Voyevoda of Bratslav and to set his house on fire; and I had got there before them, for I had gone there with Father

Patronius Lasko, who took me to Khmyelnitski at Hushch, for the Voyevoda had sent him with a letter to Khmyelnitski, so I went back with him and, this time, the Cossacks had burned down Hushch and killed Father Patronius, because he loved us; and the same thing would have happened to the Voyevoda, if he had been there, although he is their great, blessed benefactor. . . . "

"Speak plainly and do not mix up things so. I cannot understand you. You were then with the Cossacks? With Khmyelnitski? How is that?"

"Certainly, I was with the Cossacks; for when they caught me in Chigrin they took me for one of their own, and would not let me go. But dress yourself, sir! Dear God, and the things are so destroyed that one can hardly hold them in his hand. May God . . . do not get angry any more, master, because I did not deliver the letter in Rozloga that you wrote in Kudak. . . . That thief, Bohun, took it away from me. If the fat nobleman had not been there, it would have been all up with me."

"I know all about it, I know! It is not thy fault. This fat nobleman is in the camp. He has told me everything; just as it happened. He also took the princess away from Bohun and she is being well taken care of in Bar."

"Oh, thank God! I knew that Bohun had not got her. Then the wedding will soon take place?"

"Certainly; certainly. From here, we are commanded to ride at once to Tarnopol and from thence to Bar."

"Thanks be to God, the Just! Bohun will hang himself yet. A witch prophecied to him that he would never get the one of whom he thinks, and that a Pole would get her; and this Pole is you, sir!"

"How did you find out all that?"

"I heard it. I must tell you all the truth; but dress yourself meanwhile, sir, for they are already preparing breakfast for us. Listen, when I was leaving Kudak in the boat, we rowed a frightfully long time against the stream and, besides this, the boat went to pieces and we had to mend it. We rowed, therefore, my master, we rowed, ... "

"You rowed, rowed!" interrupted Skshetuski impatiently.

"And arrived in Chigrin. What happened there, you already know."

"I know all about it."

"I was lying in the stable then, and could not see God's

beautiful world. Along came Khmyelnitski, immediately after Bohun's departure, with an immense force of Zaporojians and, as the Chief Hetman had punished the people of Chigrin before for their fealty to the Zaporojians, and many in the town were killed and wounded, they thought that I must belong to them, too; and so they did not kill me, but gave me instead all comfort and care, and would not allow the Tartars to take me with them, although they allowed them everything else. When I came to myself, I thought, what should I do? And this villain had, meanwhile, gone to Korsun and had beaten the hetmans there. Oh, master! What my eyes saw there, cannot be described in words. They concealed nothing and knew no shame, as they took me for one of their own. And I thought, 'shall I fly or shall I not fly;' and I thought it was safer to wait for a better opportunity. When they began to bring in from Korsun silver chests, jewels. . . . Ah, me, master, my heart came near breaking; and my eyes protruded from the sockets. And these rascally thieves, they sold six silver spoons for one rouble, yes, even for a quart of vodki; and one could, with a golden button or a buckle, or a strap of a cap get a pint. I thought to myself, why should I sit here, doing nothing. I will take advantage of my opportunities. With God's help, I will sometime go back to Jendziani in Podlasia, where my parents live, I will go to them; for they have a lawsuit, there, with the Yavorski, which has already lasted fifty years, and they have no means with which to carry it on. And, master, I bought all sorts of treasures, enough to load two horses; and that was my only comfort in my sadness, for I was dreadfully homesick to see you, sir."

"You are the same old Jendzian, always seeking to turn everything to your own advantage."

"May God bless me, there is no harm in that. I do not steal, and if you gave me a purse to take on my way to Rozloga, here it is. I think it is right to give it back, for I did not get to Rozloga."

Then he loosened his belt, drew forth a purse and laid it down before the knight. Skshetuski, however, smiled and said:

"If you have had such good luck, you are undoubtedly richer than I am; but keep this little purse."

"I thank you most humbly, sir. I have already collected some property, thank God. My parents will be glad of it,

and also my grandfather, who is ninety years old; and the Yavorskis will spend their last penny in the lawsuit and will wander about at last with a beggar's sack. And you, sir, will also reap some advantage, for I will not ask again for the colored belt that you promised me in Kudak, although I did take a great fancy to it."

"Because you have already asked for it! Oh what a rogue you are. You are truly an insatiable wolf. I do not know where the belt is, but whatever I promised you, you shall have. If it is not that one, then another."

"I thank you most humbly," said the boy, clasping his master's knees.

"Well, enough of that! Go on telling me what happened to you."

"Well, God helped me to get my share among the robbers. The only thing that troubled me was, that I did not know what had happened to you, and I feared that Bohun had got the young lady. I heard that he was in Cherkass, and that he could hardly breathe, because the princes had wounded him severely; so I went to Cherkass. As you know, sir, I understand putting on plasters and binding up wounds. Every one had found that out, so the Colonel Donits sent me to him and he came with me himself, so that I might bind up the rascal. Now, for the first time, a load fell from my heart; for I learned that our young lady had escaped with that nobleman. So I went to Bohun. I thought to myself, 'will he recognize me? Will he not recognize me?' But he lay in a fever and, at first, he did not recognize me at all. Later on, however, he knew me and said to me. Did you not ride with the letter to Rozloga?' I said, 'Yes,' and he said, 'And I hit you with an axe in Chigrin?' 'You did, sir.' 'You are in the service of Skshetuski,' he said; and I, who would not dare to tell you a lie, said 'I am in no one's service, sir, I have got more evil than good in that service; that is why I preferred to live in freedom with the Cossacks; and I have been attending you, sir, for ten days and I will make you well.' He now began to believe what I said and became very confidential. I heard from him that Rozloga was burned down; that he had killed the two princes and that the others, when they heard it, wanted at first to go to our prince; but, as they could not do that, they fled to the Lithuanian army. But the worst was, when I mentioned the fat nobleman. Then he would gnash his teeth, just as if he was cracking nuts."

"Was he ill long?"

"A very long time; for the wounds healed up and then broke open again, because he would not take care of himself at first. I sat by him a good many nights,—the devil take him—as I would by a good man. But you must know, sir, that I have sworn, by my soul's salvation, that I will pay him back for the injuries he has done me, and I will keep it, sir, if it should take me my whole life to find him. For he treated me, an innocent fellow, as if I were a dog and disgraced me; and I am no vagabond. He will fall by my hand if somebody does not kill him before then. I tell you, sir, I have had the opportunity a hundred times for I was often enough alone with him, but I thought to myself, 'Shall I stab him or not; and I was ashamed to kill him as he lay in bed."

"That is praiseworthy of you that you did not kill him upon his sick bed. That would have been a peasant's trick, not worthy of a nobleman."

"That is what I thought, sir. It also occurred to me, that when my parents sent me away from home, my grandfather said to me at parting, 'Remember, my boy, that you are a nobleman and have honor to preserve. Serve faithfully, but never take a bribe.' He also said, that when a nobleman acts like a peasant, the Lord Jesus weeps; and I have remembered the lesson and follow it. So I had to let that opportunity go by, and we became more and more confidential. Once, he asked me, 'How shall I reward you?' And I answered, 'As you please.' And I cannot complain. He provided handsomely for me and I took it; for I thought, why should it remain in the hands of a bandit. And the others also gave me presents on his account; for I tell you, master, no one is so beloved as he by the peasantry and the people of Nij, although, in the whole Commonwealth, there is not a nobleman who had such a contempt for the 'blacks' as he has. . . " Here Jendzian shook his head as though he were trying to remember something or was in pain and, after a pause, he continued speaking: "He is a strange man, and it must be owned that he has the courage of a nobleman in everything. And the young lady—how he loves her! How he loves her! Mighty God! When he began to recover, a girl came to him from Dontsov to tell his fortune and she prophecied nothing good. A contemptible giantess, she is in communication with the devil . . . but a jolly girl. When she laughed you could have sworn that a mare was whinnying in the meadow. She showed her white teeth and they were so strong that they

could have torn a coat of armor, and, when she walked the floor trembled beneath her steps. And through God's providence it was obvious that she liked me. She never passed me without seizing me by the head or by the hand, or knocking up against me. Sometimes she said to me, 'Come along,' but I was afraid that the 'black' beauty might twist my neck somewhere in the solitude; and then I should have lost all that I had gathered together. I answered her, therefore, 'Are there not enough of others?' And she said, "You please me, although you are only a boy, you please me, come along.' 'Be off with you, girl,' but she answered, 'you please me, you please me.' "

"And did you see her when she was fortune-telling?" (performing witchcraft).

"I saw her and heard her. Clouds of smoke, hissing, whistling, shadows, so that I shook for fear. But she stood in the midst, knitting her black eye brows and repeated, 'The Pole is with her! The Pole is with her! Chylu! Huku! Chylu! The Pole is with her!' Then she scattered wheat into a sieve and looked at it, and the grains crept hither and thither like worms; and she cried, 'Chylu! Huku! Chylu! The Pole is with her!' Ah, sir, if he had not been such a robber, one's heart would have bled at the sight of his despair after each prophecy. He grew pale as a sheet, fell upon his back, wrung his hands despairingly above his head, and cried, and whimpered, and implored the young lady's forgiveness for having come to Rozloga with force; for having killed her cousins. 'Where art thou, little Cuckoo, where art thou, Only One?' he said. 'I will carry thee in my arms—I cannot live without thee—I will not touch thee,' he said, 'with my hands; I will be thy slave if only my eyes might behold thee!' Then, he would remember Zagloba and gnash his teeth and bite his bed, until sleep overcame him; but even in his sleep he sighed and groaned."

"But did she never tell him anything good?"

"What happened after that, I do not know; for he recovered his health and I got away from him. Father Lasko came, and he persuaded Bohun to let me go with him to Hushch. The thievish mob there knew that I had all sorts of property with me. I, also, made no secret of it, that I was going home to help my parents."

"And they did not plunder you?"

"Perhaps they would have done so but, fortunately there were no Tartars there, and the Cossacks would not dare for

fear of Bohun; besides they took me for one of their own people. Khmyelnitski told me to listen and tell what went on at the house of the Voyevoda of Bratslav when the leaders should come together. . . May the devil light him home! So I came to Hushch, and, one day, the advance guard of Kshyvonos arrived and killed Father Lasko, so I buried half of my goods I had gained by bargaining, while I fled hither with the other half; as I heard that my master was fighting the enemy near Zaslav. Thanks be to Almighty God on high that I found you, my master, in good health and good spirits, and that you will soon have a wedding. . . Thus all bad things will comė to an end. I said to the rascals who were marching against our prince, that they would never return. Now they've got it! Perhaps the war will come to an end."

"What do you say? The prince is only beginning and is about to attack Khmyelnitski himself."

"And after your wedding you will go back to fight?"

"Did you think that my wedding would transform me into a coward?"

"No, I did not believe that. I know very well, if any one was a coward it would not be you. I was only asking; for, when I have taken home what I have collected to my parents, I would like to go with you. Perhaps God will help me to pay back Bohun for what he did to me, as I cannot do it by treachery, where should I find him but in the field? He will not be able to hide himself."

"How determined a fellow you are?"

"Let each one carry out what he has undertaken. As I have undertaken to do so, I will follow him, even to Turkey. It cannot be otherwise. Now, I will go with you to Tarnopol, then to the wedding. But why do you go to Bar by way of Tarnopol? That does not lie in your way."

"I must lead my regiments."

"I understand, my master."

"And now bring me something to eat," said Skshetuski.

"I was thinking already that the stomach was the chief thing."

"We will set out immediately after breakfast."

"Well, thank God, although my nag is frightfully worn out."

"I will give you a pack-horse, upon which you may ride from now out."

"I thank you most humbly," said Jendzian, and smiled contentedly at the thought, that counting the purse and the girdle, he had already received a third present.

CHAPTER XVII.

Skshetuski rode at the head of the prince's regiments to Zbaraj, not to Tarnopol; for a new command had been given to go thither. And on the road he related to his faithful servant an account of his own adventures: how he had been taken prisoner in Sich, how he had remained there some time; what he had suffered, before Khmyelnitski set him free. They moved forward slowly, although they had neither wagons nor baggage with them; but the road led through such a devastated country that it was with the greatest difficulty that they could get any provisions for men and horses. Here and there, they came across crowds of famishing people, especially women with children who prayed God for death, yes, even for captivity among the Tartars; so that, although in chains, they might have something to eat. And this was the time of harvest in this fruitful land, flowing with milk and honey. But Kshyvonos advance guards had destroyed everything that could be destroyed; and the remaining inhabitants lived on the bark of trees. It was not until they reached the vicinity of Yampol that the soldiers came to a country that had not been so completely destroyed by war and, as they now had better resting places and more provisions, they went by forced marches to Zbaraj and arrived there five days after leaving Sukhojints.

An enormous crowd of people had collected in Zbaraj. Prince Yeremy halted here with his entire force and, besides these, a number of soldiers and noblemen had come to the place. The air was full of rumors of war. Nothing else was talked about. The town and the neighborhood were alive with armed men. The peace party in Warsaw, whose hopes were continually being raised by Pan Kisiel, the Voyevoda of Bratslav had, in fact, not yet given up the negotiations and, still believed that the storm could be laid peacefully; but they understood one thing that the negotiations could have no result, unless a mighty army stood ready at their call. The Diet convened amid those threatenings of war which usually

precede an outbreak. The general militia was summoned; the regular troops were gathered together and, although the chancellor and the commanders still believed in peace, the nobility was dominated by a desire for war. The victories which Vishnyovyetski had gained excited their imagination. Their minds were filled with a thirst for revenge on the peasantry and with a desire to atone for the Zolta Woda, for Korsun, for the blood of so many thousands who had died the death of martyrs and endured disgrace and humiliation. The name of the terrible prince shone in the sunlight of glory—it was in all mouths, in all hearts and, coupled with this name, in the same breath, rang, from the shores of the Black Sea to the Wild Lands the calamitous cry, "War!"

War! War! The signs in the heavens foretold it, and the glowing faces of the soldiers, the glitter of the swords, the nightly howl of dogs before the cabins, the neighing of horses, who scented blood, "War." All titled people who bore arms in all lands, districts, and settlements, hunted up their old armor and swords from the store houses. The youths sang songs about Yeremy and the women prayed at the altars. Armed men surged hither and thither, in Prussia as in Livonia, in Great Poland as in the swarming Mazovia, even to the divine summits of the Tatsha and the black forest of Bashkia.

War lay in the force of circumstances. The plundering attitude of the Zaporojians and the insurrection of the Ukraine "blacks" required higher watchwords than robbery and murder, than war against serfdom and the greed of the magnates. Khmyelnitski well understood this, and profiting by the pent up irritation caused by reciprocal ill-treatment and oppression, of which there was no lack in those sad times; and he made use of this knowledge and transformed his social struggle into a religious one, fanned the fanaticism of the people, and from the very beginning had formed an abyss between the two camps—an abyss that neither parchment nor negotiations but only blood could fill.

And if he sincerely wished negotiations, it was only in order to secure himself and his own power; and then let come what may, the hetman of the Zaporojians cared not. He did not look into the future, it troubled him little.

He did not know, however, that the abyss that he had created had become so great that no negotiations could fill it, not even in the time that Khmyelnitski would give it. The

keen politician did not understand that he would not be able to enjoy in peace, the bloody fruits of his life.

And it was easy to see that yonder, where armed hundreds of thousands stood opposed to each other the parchment on which treaties would be written would be the field of battle, and the pens would be the swords and lances.

Thus, events, through the force of circumstances, compelled the war, and even commonplace people who only followed their instincts, discerned that it could not be otherwise. And over the whole Commonwealth all eyes were ever more turned to Yeremy, who had, from the beginning proclaimed a war of life and death. In the shadow of this gigantic form, gradually disappeared the chancellor and Voyevoda of Bratslav and the commanders, and among them the mighty Prince Dominik, who had been made commander-in-chief. Their authority, their importance vanished, and the respect for the offices they held, diminished. The army and the nobility were commanded to assemble near Lemberg and then near Gliniani and fresh troops continually joined them. The regular troops arrived, followed by the country people from the neighboring Vyevodstvas (provinces), new events began to threaten the authority of the Commonwealth. Not only the less disciplined regiments of the militia, not only the private regiments, but, even the regular troops, when they had gathered at the place of meeting, refused obedience to the Commander and in defiance of orders marched to Zbaraj in order to place themselves under the command of Prince Yeremy. The Voyevoda of Kiev and Bratslav, whose nobles had already served in large numbers under Yeremy followed their example. Then came those at Russ and Lubelsk, and these were followed by the royal army; and it was no longer difficult to prophecy that all others would follow their example.

Yeremy, who had been intentionally overlooked and forgotten, had through the power of circumstances become the hetman and commander-in-chief of all the fighting strength of the Commonwealth. The nobility and the soldiers were devoted to him, body and soul, and only waited for his nod. All power, war, peace, the future of the Commonwealth lay in his hands.

Yeremy's authority increased from day to day. For every day new regiments joined him and he grew to such gigantic stature that his shadow began to fall, not only on the chan-

cellor and the Commander of the army, but also upon the Senate, upon Warsaw and upon the whole Commonwealth.

In the circles of the chancellor at Warsaw which was unfavorable to him; in the camp of the commanders among those that surrounded Prince Dominik and the Voyevoda of Bratslav, the conversation turned on his boldness and his ambition. They recalled the old affair of Hadziach; when the bold prince, with four thousand men, had come to Warsaw and stepped into the Senate chamber, as if he was ready to cut them all down, the king himself not excepted.

"What can one expect from such a man, and what must he be now," they said, "after the bold Xenophon-like march from the other side of the Dnieper; after all his marches and victories, that have brought him such unbounded glory. What tremendous pride must he not feel in the love of the soldiery of the nobles! Who would dare withstand him to-day? What would happen to the Commonwealth if a citizen should gather such power that he could trample the will of the senate under his feet; who could wrest the power from the leaders appointed by the Commonwealth? Does he really intend to put Prince Charles on the throne? He is a Marius, it is true; but God grant that he may not develop into a Marcus Coriolanus or a Cataline, for he resembles them both in pride and ambition."

This was the talk in Warsaw and among the officers, and especially at the court of Prince Dominik, whose rivalry with Yeremy had already caused no slight harm to the Commonwealth. Yonder Marius, however, remained meanwhile in Zbaraj, gloomy, impenetrable; his newly gained victory did not light up his countenance. If any new regiment from the regulars or any district militia from the general army came to Zbaraj, he rode to meet them, took in their strength at a glance, and returned again to his brooding. The soldiers crowded round his quarters with cheers; fell on their knees before him and cried: "We greet thee, thou invincible commander, Slavonic Hercules! We will give our lives for thee!" He, however, answered: "I thank you, we are all under Christ's command and my rank is too low for me to be the disposer of your life." And then he retired into his own quarters, fled from every one, and wrestled with his thoughts in solitude.

Thus days passed. In the meantime, the town was surging with fresh swarms of soldiers. The Commonwealth soldiers

drank from morning till night, roamed about the streets, made disturbances, and quarrelled with the strange officers. The regular troops who also felt that the reins of discipline were a little slackened gave themselves to drinking, to enjoyment and to throwing dice. Strangers arrived daily, and there were daily new festivities and amusements, with the citizens' daughters. The soldiers lined all the streets and slept in the neighboring villages. And what a variety of horses, armor, costumes, plumes, caparisons, hangings, and colors of various provinces! One might have believed it was a general carnival to which half the Commonwealth had gathered together. Sometimes a nobleman's carriage came along, colored with gold and crimson and drawn by six or eight horses with plumes of feathers on their heads. Pajuks, dressed in Hungarian or German fashion, Janissaries, Cossacks, Tartars; at another time, officers would ride into the town dressed in silk and velvet, without armor, pushing the crowd aside as they sat erect on their Anatolian or Persian horses. Their aigrettes and brooches gleamed in the firelight with diamonds and rubies, and all stepped out of the way out of respect. Yonder, in the hall of the court, an officer of the country infantry appears, in a fresh glittering doublet, with his long staff in his hand; pride in his face and his citizen's heart in his breast. Yonder gleamed the crested helmets of dragoons, the caps of German infantry, the wooden lances of the militia, in lynx-skin caps. Servants rush hither and thither in the most diverse colors fulfilling their duties. Here and there the street was blocked by carriages. Yonder some carriages came along, creaking unmercifully. Everywhere one heard servants calling "Get out of the way," cursing, wrangling, fighting, and the neighing of horses. The little side streets are filled with hay and straw so as to be almost impassable.

And in the midst of these gaudy costumes which shone in all colors of the rainbow; in the midst of the velvet and silk, the laces and buckles; amidst the glitter of diamonds, how strange Vishnyovyetski's men looked! Worn out, in ragged clothes, in rusty armor, faded and torn uniforms. The soldiers of the crack regiment looked like beggars, worse than the servants of other regiments; and, yet, all bowed before these rags, before these tatters and faded colors; for they were the tokens of heroes. War is a cruel mother, she devours her own children like Saturn, and those she does not

devour, she gnaws as a dog does a bone. These faded colors were evidence of heavy rainfalls at night, of marches in storm, or burning sun. This rust on their armor, a token of their own blood-stains or of the enemy's or both together. They talked in the wine-shops, and soldiers quarters; the rest listened to them and, often a convulsion seemed to seize one of the listeners and he would clap his hands on his thighs and cry, "May the balls strike you! You are devils, not men." And Vishnyovyetski's men answered, "The merit is not ours but our leader, whose equal the world has never yet produced." And then all concluded with a cry, "Vivat Yeremy, Vivat the Voyevoda! The commander of commanders! The hetman of hetmans! . . . . "

And the nobleman drank and dashed out into the streets and shot off guns and muskets; and when Vishnyovyetski's men reminded them that this freedom would only last a short while; for the time would come when the prince would take them into his hands, and discipline them as they had never yet been disciplined, they enjoyed themselves with all the more zest.

"Let us enjoy ourselves while we are free!" they cried. "When the time comes to obey we will obey, for we would willingly be obedient to one who is not a *Jziecina*, nor *lacina*, nor *pierzyna*.[1]" And the unfortunate Prince Dominik came off second best, for the tongues of the soldiers made mince-meat of him. They related to one another how he prayed all day long and that, in the evening, he would hang on to the jug and dribble on his breast, and merely open his eyes and ask, "What is that?" They also said that he took jalap at night and that all the battles he saw were those worked in his Dutch carpet. No one stood up for him, no one pitied him. And those who were in open discord with the military discipline, were the ones who condemned him the most; but Zagloba exceeded these in ridicule and sarcasm. He had recovered from his backache and was now quite in his element. What he eat and drank is beyond description and would hardly be believed. He was constantly surrounded by large groups of soldiers and noblemen, and he talked and told stories and ridiculed the very ones who treated him. As an old soldier he also looked down with contempt on those who were just taking service and was accustomed to say, with the

[1] Play upon the rhymes *baby*, *Latin*, *feather-quilt*.

whole weight of experience: "You know as much about the fatigues of war as the nuns of a man. You have new clothes that smell of lavender; and, although that is a pleasant odor, I will endeavor in the first battle to keep to windward of you. Whoever has not smelt the leek of war does not know what tears it can squeeze out. Then you will not get your hot beer in the morning, or your wine punch. Your bellies will fall in; you will become dried up like curds in the sun. You may believe me, experience is the main thing. I have been in so many dangers, yes—have taken so many flags, but I must tell you this, gentlemen—none came so hard to me as the one I took at Konstantinov. May the devil take these Zaporojians! The sweat was streaming down me, before I could grasp the flag staff. Ask Pan Skshetuski, he who killed Burdabut. He saw it with his own eyes and was astonished. But I tell you, now, you have only to scream into a Cossack ear, 'Zagloba,' and you will see what he will answer. But why do I tell you this, you, who have only killed the flies on the wall with a flipper, and nobody else."

"How is that? What?" asked the younger men.

"What? Oh, you want my tongue to take fire from constant friction, like the hub of a wagon."

"You must lubricate it with wine," cried the noblemen.

"That's different," answered Zagloba.

And, gratified to have found appreciative listeners, he began to tell them all over again, from the beginning—about the journey to Galatz, and about the flight from Rozloga to the taking of the flag at Konstantinov, and they listened with open mouths. And though they demurred sometimes when, in praising his own courage, he ridiculed their inexperience, they nevertheless invited him every day to drink with them in a different quarter.

Thus, they lived joyously and happily in Zbaraj; until old Zatsvilikhovski and other earnest men began to wonder that the prince could tolerate these carousals so long. He, however, remained continually in his quarters, evidently allowing the soldiers to give themselves up to enjoyment, that they might thoroughly enjoy life before undertaking fresh battles. In the meantime, Skshetuski had returned and came into the midst of all this, as into a whirlpool. He would have enjoyed resting in the company of his comrades, but he would rather have ridden to Bar, to his Beloved, where he could forget all former sorrow, all fear and anxiety in her sweet

embrace. He went, therefore, without delay to the prince, to give him an account of his expedition to Zaslav and to request permission to undertake another journey.

He found the prince so changed that he was hardly recognizable and, at sight of him, Skshetuski started, and asked himself, "Is this the leader whom I saw at Makhnovka and at Konstantinov?" For, before him, there stood a man, bowed with the weight of care, with hollow eyes and dry lips, as though wasting with an internal complaint. To the inquiries after his health, he answered curtly and dryly that he was in good health, and the knight dared not ask any more. He merely gave an account of his expedition and begged permission to be allowed to leave the regiment for two months in order to get married and take his bride to Skshetusheva.

The prince seemed suddenly to wake from a dream. His habitual kindness lighted up his clouded face; he drew Skshetuski to him and said:

"Then your torture is at an end. Go; go and may Heaven bless you. I wish I could attend your wedding, for I owe it to young Panna Kurtsevich as the daughter of Vasil and to you as my friend; but at this time it is not possible. When will you go?"

"Your Highness, to-day if I may."

"Go to-morrow. You cannot travel alone. I will give you three hundred of Vyershul's Tartars that you may take her home in safety. You will get there sooner with these men than with any others; and you need them, for it is swarming with the mob over there. I will also give you a letter to Pan Andrey Pototski; but, before I can write it, before the Tartars come, before you have finished all your preparations, it will be to-morrow evening."

"As your Highness commands; but I venture to request permission that Volodiyovski and Podbipyenta also go with me."

"Well, come again to-morrow that I may take leave of you and give you my blessing. I should also like to send your young princess some remembrance. You are a good fellow; be happy, for you deserve each other.

"Skshetuski had sunk to the ground and clasped the knees of his beloved commander, who repeated several times:

"God give you his blessing! God give you his blessing! Come again to-morrow."

But the knight did not rise and did not go away, as though he yet wished to beg for something else. Finally he said:

"Your Highness."

"What have you to say to me now," asked the prince kindly.

"Your Highness, pardon my boldness but . . . my heart is breaking, my great sorrow gives me courage. What troubles your Highness. Does any care or sickness oppress you."

The prince laid his hand upon the knight's head:

"You must not know," said he in the tenderest voice, "come again to-morrow."

Skshetuski rose from the floor and went out with a pain at his heart.

Towards evening, old Zatsvilikhovski came into his quarters, and with him, little Volodiyovski, Pan Longin and Zagloba. They sat down at the table and Jendzian brought goblets and a keg.

"In the name of the Father and the Son," cried Zagloba, "I see your boy has risen from the dead."

Jendzian stepped up to him and clasped his knees.

"I did not rise from the dead; I did not die, for you saved me.' '

And Skshetuski added:

"And then he went into Bohun's service."

"Then he will be promoted in hell," said Zagloba. Then turning to Jendzian, "You could not have had much enjoyment in that service. There, take a dollar to comfort you."

"I thank you humbly," said Jendzian.

But Skshetuski called out: "He is a rascal, a great sharper. He brought so much booty from the Cossacks that both of us together could not buy it, even should you turn all your possessions in Turkey into money."

"Is that so," said Zagloba, "Well, keep my dollar and flourish dear sapling until you are fit for—not the cross of Christ, but a gallows. The boy has a bright eye." Here Zagloba took Jendzian by the ear, pulled it gently and continued: "I love rascals and I prophecy that you will yet be a man if you do not remain a calf, and what does your master Bohun say about me? What?"

Jendzian laughed. Zagloba's words and petting had flattered him, and he answered:

"Oh, Sir, when he speaks of you, he strikes sparks by gnashing his teeth."

"Go to the devil," cried Zagloba, in sudden anger. "What are you chattering about?"

Jendzian moved away. The others began to chat about the following day's journey and the unspeakable happiness that was awaiting Pan Yan. The mead put Zagloba into the happiest humor and he began to tease Skshetuski, to talk about baptism and then of Andrey Pototski's admiration for the young princess. Pan Longin sighed. They drank and were glad at heart until the conversation turned on the situation of the war and the prince's condition. Skshetuski, who had not been in the camp for some days time, said:

"Tell me, gentlemen, what has happened to our Prince? He is not the same man. I canot understand it. God has given him victory on victory. What was the meaning of their passing him by in the choice of a commander? The consequence is, that the whole army is crowding under his banner, so that he can become a hetman without anybody's permission, and will destroy Khmyelnitski . . . And yet some trouble is preying on him."

"Perhaps he is plagued with the gout,' 'said Zagloba. "If it pinches my big toe, I am melancholy for three days."

"And I tell you, little brother, "began Pan Longin shaking his head, "I did not hear this myself from Father Makhovietski but I heard that he told somebody why the prince was worried. I will not say anything, for he is a kind master, a great and good warrior. I do not judge him but when the priest—but what do I know!"

"Just look at this Lithuanian," cried Zagloba. "We shall get the best of him if he does not speak a human language. What do you mean? You go round in a circle like a hare round her form and cannot hit the mark.

"What did you really hear?" asked Skshetuski.

"Well, if I must tell—they say he has shed too much blood. He is a great commander but he knows no moderation in punishment, and they say that he sees nothing but red; red by day, red at night, as though a red cloud enveloped him."

"Stop talking foolishness," broke in old Zatsvilikhovski, angrily, "that is old woman's talk. The people have no better master in times of peace; and, if he has no compassion on the rebels, why is that? That is his duty, no sin. What tortures, what punishment is too great for those who bathe their country in blood; who deliver up their own people into

captivity to the Tartars; who will recognize no God, no country, no authority. Where could you find me such monsters, where such excruciating tortures as those they have inflicted on women and little children, where such monstrous crimes? And you think that the stake and the gallows are too severe a penalty. Tut! Tut! You have an iron hand, but a woman's heart. I heard how you groaned when they were roasting Pulyan and you said you would rather kill him outright. But the prince is no old woman—he knows how to reward and how to punish. . . . Why are you mystifying us.

"I told you that I did not know," Pan Longin excused himself by saying.

But the old man puffed angrily for some time and ran his hand through his snow-white hair and growled:

"Red! Hm! Red! Hm! That is something new. Whoever discovered that has something green in his head, not red!"

A silence ensued. Through the window came the noise of the wrangling noblemen.

Little Volodiyovski broke the silence.

"Well, father, what do you think is the matter with our lord?"

"Hm!" said the old man, "I am not his confidant so I do not know. He is considering something. He is fighting with himself. It is a soul struggle, it cannot be otherwise; and the greater the soul, the severer the torture. . . "

And the old knight was not mistaken for, at that moment the prince, the victor, lay in the dust in his quarters, in the dust before the crucifix, and fought one of the hardest battles of his life.

The watch on the castle of Zbaraj called out midnight; and Yeremy was still communing with God and with his own exalted soul. His mind, his conscience, his love of country, his pride, the consciousness of his own strength and of his great mission had become combatants in his soul and were carrying on an obstinate fight, which threatened to break his heart, to split his head, and made all his limbs tremble with pain. Contrary to the will of the Primate, of the chancellors, of the Senate, of the commanders, against the will of the government, the regular troops, the nobility, foreign companies, flocked to this victor—in a word the whole Commonwealth gave itself into his hand; took refuge be-

neath his wings; entrusted its fate to his genius, and cried, through its favorite sons, "Save us, for thou alone canst save us!" In one month more, in two, one hundred thousand warriors would gather before Zbaraj, prepared to fight for life or death with the dragon of civil war. Here, visions of the future, bright with an overwhelming glory, of fame and power, passed before the eyes of the prince. Those who would now pass him by and humiliate him, would tremble before him. And he would take with him these iron armies of the knighthood, who would win such victories, such triumphs, in the steppes of the Ukraine, as had never been heard of. And the prince felt he had strength to do this; on his shoulders wings were growing like the wings of the great Archangel Michael. At this moment, he seemed to be transformed into a giant whom the whole castle, the whole Zbaraj, the whole of Russia could not contain. With God's help he would grind Khmyelnitski, he would trample down the rebellion; he would bring peace to the mother country. He saw the endless plains; the myriad hosts; he heard the thunder of the cannon. Carnage! carnage! An unheard of, unexampled defeat. Hundreds of thousands of corpses, hundreds of thousands of flags cover the bloody steppes, and he tramples over Khmyelnitski's body, and the trumpets proclaim the victory and their sound rings from sea to sea. . . . The prince sprang to his feet and stretched out his hands to the Christ, and around his head a red light was shining. "Christ! Christ!" he cried, "Thou seest that I can do this, tell me that it is my duty."

But the Christ's head was sunk on his breast and he seemed to be in silent anguish, as though he had just been nailed to the cross. "To thy glory," cried the prince, "*Non mihi! Non mihi! sed nomine Tuo da gloriam.* Not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name give the glory. To the glory of the faith and of the Church, of the whole of Christendom, O Christ! Christ!" And a new vision passed before the eyes of the hero. This war would not end with a victory over Khmyelnitski. When the prince should have trodden down the rebellion, he would gain bodily vigor and with gigantic force would gather together legions of Cossacks, myriads of the nobility and proceed farther, and attack the Crimea, seize the terrible dragon in his own den and raise the standard of the Cross, there, where hitherto the church-bell had ever called the faithful to prayer.

Or he would ride into those lands which the Princes Vishnyovyetski had once trampled with their horses' hoofs and extend the boundaries of the Commonwealth and, with them, the power of the Church, to the farthest ends of the earth.

What would be the end of these flights of fancy. What the end of this glory, this strength, this might? There would be no end.

The light of the moon beamed into the hall of the castle, but the clock struck a late hour and the cocks were crowing. The day would soon break and it would be a day on which, in addition to the sun in the heavens, a new sun would rise on the earth.

* * * * * *

Yes, the Prince would be a child not a man if he should not do this. If for whatsoever reason he should retreat before the voice of these powers of fate; and now he already felt a certain peace, Christ had evidently poured his compassion on him. Praise to him for this favor. He already began to see things in a more cheerful light and took in with tears in the eyes of his soul the situation of the mother country and all the circumstances attending it. The policy of the chancellor and of the leaders in Warsaw, as of the Voyevoda of Bratslav is bad—ruinous for the country, first, he must crush the Zaporojians, shed a sea of blood, crush, conquer, and then consider everything as finished. Do away with all excesses and all oppressions, introduce order and peace, subdue the rebellion with might, restore civilized life—that is the only way worthy of this great, glorious Commonwealth. Formerly perhaps another way might have been selected, but now never. For to what purpose were negotiations when numberless thousands of armed men stood opposite each other? And if conditions were agreed to, what force could they have? No, no, they are dreams, visions, this will be a war for all time, a sea of tears and blood for the future—the one course which was great, noble, and powerful, was the one they must take. He would not wish anything further, nor demand anything more. He would return again to his Lubni and wait quietly until the sound of the drums of Gradyva should call him afresh to action.

Let them go their way. But who? The Senate, the stormy diet, the chancellor, the primate or the commanders? Who besides himself could comprehend this mighty thought and could carry it out? If they could find such a one—well! But

where is he? Who has the power.—He alone—no one else! To him the nobility hasten, to him throngs the army, in his hand lies the sword of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth governs, even if a king is on the throne, and all the more when that throne is empty. She is the supreme lord of this people and this is expressed not only in the Diets, not only through deputies, in the Senate, and chancellors, not only in the written laws and manifestoes but more powerfully, more impressively, more clearly, in action. Who rules here? The military—and this military flows to Zbaraj and says to him "Thou art our commander." The whole Commonwealth with one voice gives him the authority, in virtue of the strength of his deeds, and repeats, "Thou art our commander," and should he hesitate? What appointment is necessary now? From whom should he await it? From those perhaps who desire to destroy and humiliate the Comonwealth.

And why, why? Possibly because when panic had seized all hearts, when the hetmans were taken prisoner, their army destroyed, the nobles obliged to take refuge in their castles, and the Cossack standing with his foot on the neck of the Commonwealth, he alone pushed away this foot and raised the mothers fainting from the dust. Everthing, life, property, he sacrificed for her, to save her from ignominy and death—he the victor!

Whoever has rendered the greatest service let him seize the rulership. To whomsoever it justly belongs let him hold it in his hand. He would willingly have renounced this burden, willingly have said to God and to the Commonwealth, "Let thy servant depart in peace, for behold he is very weary and exhausted and he knows surely that his memory and his grave will not perish." But as there is no one else he would be doubly and trebly a child and not a man if he should refuse this rulership, this sunlit path, this glorious shining future on which depend the salvation of the Commonwealth, her glory, her power and her fame!

And why should he?

The prince raised his head proudly and his gleaming eyes fell upon the Christ; but Christ's head was sunk on his breast in anguish and silence as though he had been newly crucified.

And why should he? The bogadiv pressed his hands to his burning temples—perhaps he would find an answer. What mean these voices that call to his soul, that through the

golden brightly-colored visions of glory, through the noise of future victories, through the forebodings of greatness and strength, so pitilessly sound in his soul? Ah! be still unhappy one! What means the unrest that fills his fearless breast with a shudder of terror? What does it mean that although ' e sees clearly and distinctly that he must seize the command something whispers in the depths of his conscience "Thou deceivest thyself! Pride leads thee astray! Satan promises you kingdoms!" And again a terrible struggle arose in the heart of the Prince and again he was whirled away by a storm of dread, uncertainty and doubt.

What is the nobility doing in joining him instead of the commanders. Trampling on authority.

What is the army doing? It is defying discipline; and he, the son of this State, the soldier would place himself at the head of insubordination, and disguise it with his authority. He would set the first example of want of discipline, of wilfulness, of contempt of law, and all this in order to snatch the power for himself two months earlier. Should Prince Charles be raised to the throne, the highest authority would really still be his. Shall he set such a terrible example to future generations? For what would happen? What a Vishnyovyetski had dared to-day, a Konyetspolski, a Pototski, a Firley, a Zamyski, or a Lubomirski would do to-morrow, and if each one should act according to his own ambition without consideration of the law and discipline; if the children should follow the example of their fathers and grandfathers, what a future would be in store for this country! The worm of wilfulness, disorder, and deeds of violence was already gnawing the root of this Commonwealth and she was tottering beneath the axe of civil war, the dry branches were falling from the tree—what would happen if those who ought to guard and defend her as the apple of their eye, should themselves set fire to her, what would happen, Jesus! Jesus Christ!

Khmyelnitski also shields himself behind the public welfare; nothing else, but he takes his stand against right and authority.

A shudder ran through the prince from head to foot and he wrung his hands. "Am I to be another Khmyelnitski, O Christ?"

But Christ's head remained bowed on his breast and he was silent in his anguish, as if he had just been crucified.

Pain gnawed afresh at the prince's heart; if he should seize the power, and the chancellor and the Senate and the

Commanders should attaint him as a traitor and a rebel—what would happen? Another civil war? And besides is Khmyelnitski the greatest and most threatening enemy of the Commonwealth? Have not greater powers attacked her before? Did not two hundred thousand iron Germans under Grunwald march against Yagyelo's regiments when at Khotsim half of Asia stood ready to fight, was not the danger closer, more threatening—what became of these hostile forces? Nothing, the Commonwealth does not fear wars. It is not wars that will destroy her. But why in view of such victories, such latent strength, such glory, why should she who had conquered the Crusaders and the Turks be so weak and powerless as to sink in the dust before a Cossack, that her neighbors should invade her boundaries, that the nations should despise her; that no one should obey her voice, should fear her anger, and that all should fortell her destruction.

Ah! Ah! It is the ambition and pride of the magnates, selfish negotiations and arbitrariness are the cause of it. Khmyelnitski is not the worst enemy but the internal discord, the license of the nobility, the want of training and discipline of the forces, the stormy Diets, the quarrels and the love of dispute, the confusion, the internal weakness, the selfishness and want of discipline—especially the want of discipline, the tree rots and dies from the heart, the first storm easily breaks it down, but the parricide who first lays his hand to it is accursed; he and his children to the tenth generation.

Then go forward, thou conqueror of Nimirov Pohrebyshch, Makhnovka and Konstantinov, go forward Prince Voyevoda, go forward, take the authority from the commanders, trample law and authority under foot, give coming generations an example of how one can wallow in the entrails of the mother.

Fear, despair, madness were depicted in the features of the prince. . . . He gave a horrible scream, placed his hand to his heart and fell in the dust before the crucifix.

He turned as he lay on the ground and struck his illustrious head against the stone steps, and from his breast came a muffled cry:

"God be merciful to me a sinner? God be merciful to me a sinner? God be merciful to me a sinner?"

The sky shone in the morning glow and the golden sun rose higher and lighted up the room. Beneath the eaves, the sparrows and swallows were twittering. The prince rose to his feet and awakened his boy, Zelenski, who was asleep behind the door.

"Hasten," he said, "to the orderlies and command them to send the colonels who are in the castle and in the town, of the regulars as well as of the militia, to me in this room."

Two hours later the room began to fill with the forms of the bearded warriors, of the prince's officers; there were present, old Zatvilikhovski, Polanovki, Skshetuski with Zagloba, Vurtzel, Captain Makhnitski, Volodiyovski, Vyershul, Colonel Machniski, Colodjowski, Wierzul, Poniatovski, almost all the officers down to the ensigns except Kushel, who had been sent to Podol to reconnoitre. Of the regular army there were present Osinski and Korytski. Many of the more distinguished nobles of the country could not be dragged out of their beds, but a few of these were present, among them, representatives from various provinces from castellans to under-chamberlains. Loud conversation was carried on and there was a humming in the room as in a hive, all eyes were directed towards the door through which the prince would appear. Suddenly silence fell; the prince had entered the room. His countenance was peaceful, cheerful, and only the eyes, red from want of sleep, and the furrowed features testified to the inward struggle, but through this cheerful and even mild appearance shone an earnest and unbending will.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I took counsel this night with God and my own conscience to find out what I ought to do. I announce to you, therefore, and you shall announce it to the whole knighthood, that for the good of the fatherland and for the sake of unity, which is so essential in times of calamity, that I submit to the authorities.

A deep silence reigned in the assembly.

At noon of the same day there stood in the courtyard of the castle three hundred of Vyershul's Tarttars in readiness to set out with Pan Skshetuski, and in the castle the prince was giving a dinner to the chief officers which was also a leave taking for our knight. He was given as the bridegroom the place of honor beside the prince, and immediately next to him sat Zagloba, for it was known that his cleverness and his courage had saved the young lady when she was in the utmost extremity. The prince was happy for he had cast a burden from his breast, and he drank toasts to the health of the young couple. The walls and windows shook with joyous shouts of the officers. In the anterooms the servants were also revelling, and Jendzian was king among them.

"Gentlemen," said the prince, "I will empty this third goblet to the coming consolation. It is a mighty nest! God grant that the apples may not fall from the tree. May this parent hawk beget worthy fledglings."

"Long life! Long life!"

"I thank you," said Skshetuski, as he emptied a mighty goblet of Malmoisie.

"Long life! Long life!" '

"*Crescite et multiplicamini!*"

"You ought to provide half a company," said old Zatsvilikhovski laughing.

"I know him already," cried Zagloba, "he will *Skshetuskirize* the army."

The nobles burst into loud laughter; the wine had mounted to their heads; one saw red faces and heard loud shouts. Everyone seemed to be getting into better humor.

"Well," said Skshetuski full of happiness, "I will confess to you that the cuckoo did promise me twelve boys."

"Good heavens! the storks will die of hard work," said Zagloba.

The others answered with a loud laughter. They all laughed and the hall rëechoed with their voices.

Suddenly there appeared on the threshold a gloomy apparition covered with dust, who, on seeing the table spread and the faces beaming with happiness, remained standing at the door as though he hesitated about entering. The prince was the first to remark his apparition. He frowned, put his hand up to his eyes and said:

"Who is there? Ah! Kushel of the advance guard! What is it? What news have you?"

"Very bad news, my Prince," said the young officer in hollow tones.

As one man the assembled company were silent as though they had fallen under a spell. The goblets remained in their hands, half way to their mouths, all eyes were directed to Kushel in whose tired face sorrow was depicted.

"It would have been better if you had not announced it just as I am happy over my wine," said the prince, "but as you have begun you had better finish."

"My Prince, I wish that I were not the herald of misfortune, for I cannot bring myself to speak this news."

"What has happened, speak."

"Bar . . . is taken!"

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

It was a bright, clear night as a small troop of horsemen moved forward on the right bank of Valadynka, in the direction of the Dniester.

They moved forward very slowly, almost step by step. At their head, a little in advance of the rest, rode two of them as an advance guard. But there was, apparently, no reason to be watchful, and, instead of looking round them, they conversed the whole time; and, as they continually pulled up their horses, they would look back at those who were following them and call out:

"Slowly there, slowly!"

And the horsemen moved still more slowly. They hardly appeared to advance.

At length, as they rounded a hill which had shaded them, they came out into an open space which was flooded with moonlight, and one could now understand better why they moved so slowly. In the middle of the caravan, the horses carried between them a litter, fastened to their saddles, in which lay a human form.

The silver moonbeams lighted up the pale face and closed eyes.

Ten men rode behind the litter. By their lances without pennants, one knew they were Cossacks. Some of them were leading pack-horses, others rode untrammeled.

But little as the foremost horsemen appeared to be watching the neighborhood, so much the more uneasily and anxiously did the rest look round them on all sides.

And yet the region appeared to be a perfect desert.

The silence was broken only by the sound of horse's hoofs and the cry of one or two of the foremost riders, who, from time to time repeated the warning:

"Slowly, carefully!"

Presently he turned to his companion.

"Is it far, Horpyna," he asked. His companion, whom he

had called "Horpyna," a gigantic young woman dressed like a Cossack, looked up at the starry sky and answered:

"Not much farther; we shall be there before midnight. We are now going along Koroshchi Pass, then we come to the Tartar plains; and then we shall get at once into the Czortowy Jar (Devil's Hollow). Oh, it would be dangerous to ride through there after midnight before the cock crows! I might do it, but it would be hard with you, very hard!"

The foremost horseman shrugged his shoulders.

"I know," he said, "that you are allied with the Devil, but there are remedies even against him."

"Devil or no devil, there is no remedy," answered Horpyna. "If you, Falcon, should look the whole world through for a hiding-place for your young princess, you could not find a better one. Here, no one comes through after midnight, except with me; and no foot of man has ever trodden the Devils' Hollow. If anyone wishes his fortune told, they stand at the entrance to the Hollow and wait till I come out. Fear nothing! No one gets in there; neither Poles, Tartars, nor anyone else. The Devil's Hollow is gruesome. You will see it."

"Let it be as gruesome as it likes, I tell you I will come, and come there, as often as I have a mind to."

"Will you do it in the daytime?"

"Whenever it pleases me; and if the Devil himself stood across the entrance, I would take him by the horns."

"Ah, Bohun; Bohun!"

"Ah, Dontsovna, Dontsovna! Do not be worried about me. If the Devil gets me or not, it won't be your fault; but I will tell you one thing. Do what you like with your Devil; but if any harm happens to the princess, there is no devil or vampire who will be able to save you from my hands."

"They tried to drown me once when I was living with my brother on the Don; another time, the executioner in Yampol had already shorn my head, and still nothing happened to me. But that is another matter. I will watch over her for you. Not a hair shall fall from her head on account of the ghosts; and in my cave, she is safe from human beings. She will not vanish from you."

"Oh, you owl! If you say this, why did you prophecy to me that it would go hard with me? Why did you shout into my ear 'a Pole stands by her! a Pole stands by her?' "

"I did not say that; it was the spirits. But perhaps things

have changed now. To-morrow, I will tell your fortune above the water by the millwheel. You can see everything clearly in the water, but you have to look into it for a long time. You yourself shall see it; but you are a mad dog. If one tells you the truth, you fly into a rage and seize your axe."

The conversation ceased. Again, one heard only the sound of hoofs on the stones and other sounds which came from the river, like the chirping of crickets. Bohun paid no attention to these sounds, which might have aroused attention at that time of night. He turned his face up towards the moon, and became plunged in deep thought.

"Horpyna," he said, after a pause.

"What do you want?"

"You sorceress; you must know if it is true that there is an herb which, if brewed, will cause the one who drinks it to fall in love. Love-wort or whatever it is called."

"Lubystka. But no lubystka will help your misery. If the princess did not love anyone else, one might give it to her to drink; but, if she loves another—do you know what will happen?"

"What?"

"Why, she will love the other all the more intensely."

"Go to destruction, together with your lubystka. You can only prophecy evil, but you cannot advise me."

"Listen, then; I know another herb that grows in the ground. Whoever drinks of this herb will lie two days and two nights like a log and will not know what happens to him. I will give her some of this herb—and then . . ."

The Cossack raised himself in his saddle and looked the witch through and through with his gleaming eyes.

"What are you croaking?" he asked.

"Tayhodi," cried the witch, and burst into a frightful laugh; like the neighing of a mare.

The laughter echoed ominously in the sides of the ravine.

"Bitch!" said the Cossack leader.

And the fire left his eyes and he sank once more into deep thought.

At length he said, as if talking to himself:

"No! No! When we took Bar, I was the first who penetrated into the convent in order to shelter her from the drunken fellows and to beat in the brains of anyone who dared to touch her; and she, herself, plunged a knife into her breast—now she lies there unconscious. If I should touch

her, only with my hand, she would stab herself again or jump into the river. I! unhappy one, could not prevent it."

"You are at heart a Pole and no Cossack; if you will not take possession of the maiden, Cossack fashion."

"Oh, if I were a Pole! if I were a Pole!" cried Bohun. "If I were a Pole!"

He seized his cap with both hands, for he was overcome with wild sorrow.

"She must have bewitched you, this young Pole," murmured Horpyna.

"She must, indeed," he answered sadly. "Oh, if the first bullet had only killed me, or that I had ended my dog's life on the stake. . . . I desire only one being in the world, and this one will not have me."

"Fool!" cried Horpyna, angrily, "why, you have her!"

"Shut your jaw," answered the Cossack furiously.

"And, if she kills herself, what then?"

"Then I would tear you to pieces; tear myself to pieces; dash my head on the stones and bite everyone like a dog. I would give my soul for her, the honor of a Cossack; and would fly to Yahorlik, and farther away, to the end of the world; if I could fly with her, if I could live with her, could die with her!"

"Nothing will happen to her; she will not die."

"If she should die, I would nail you to the door!"

"You have no authority over her."

"I have none, none at all. I would that she might stab me with her knife; that she might kill me; it would be better."

"The foolish little Pole. If she would only give herself to you of her own free will. Could she find a better one than you?"

"If you can manage that, I will send you a pot full of ducats and another full of pearls. We got good booty in Bar, and before that, too."

"You are rich as Prince Yeremy—and loaded with fame. They say that even Kshyvonos fears you."

The Cossack waved his hand.

"What good does that all do me, when my heart aches?"

And again, there was a silence. The river bank became more wild, more desolate. The pale moonlight gave fantastic shapes to the trees and rocks. Presently Horpyna spoke.

"Here is the Uoroshchi Pass. We must ride together."

"Why?"

"It is uncanny here."

They reined in their horses and, in a few minutes, were joined by those that were riding behind them. Bohun rose in his stirrups, and looked into the litter.

"Is she asleep?" he asked.

"She is sleeping as sweetly as a child," answered the old Cossack.

"I gave her a sleeping draught," said the fortune teller.

"Slowly, carefully," said Bohun, almost devouring the sleeping form with his eyes. Do not waken her. The moon is shining straight in her face, my darling."

"Quiet; do not wake her," whispered one of the Cossacks.

And the cavalcade proceeded on its way. They soon reached the Uoroshchi Pass. This was a low, barren hill, that lay close by the river; like a round disk on the ground. The moon streamed down on it and lighted up the white stones that were spread over its whole surface. In places, these formed heaps and looked like the remains of ruined churches and castles. In some places, there were flat stones that stood on end and looked like gravestones in a churchyard. The whole hill looked like a great heap of ruins. Possibly, at one time, long ago, in the time of the Yagyello, men had lived here. Now, the hill and the whole region, as far as Rashkov, was a desolate wilderness in which only wild animals dwelt and where at night, lost souls carried on their orgies.

The cavalcade had hardly ascended the hills halfway, when the light wind which had been blowing changed to a regular storm, which blew around the hill with a peculiar melancholy and ominous whistling sound and it seemed to the Cossacks as though, from among these ruins heavy sighs and groans issued as though forced from some human breast, and then changed into laughing and crying voices of children. The whole hill seemed alive and began to resound with various voices. Behind the stones, tall dark forms seemed to look forth; strange shadows glided forth among the pebbles; in the semi-darkness weird lights gleamed in the distance, like the glittering of wolves eyes. Finally, from the farther end of the hill, between the heaps of stones and ruins there came a howling as from the depths of the earth, which was also accompanied by the former sounds.

"Are those siromakhs?" whispered a young Cossack to the leader.

"No, those are vampires!" answered another, softly.

"Oh God, have mercy on us!" cried others, as they took off their caps and crossed themselves devoutly.

The horses pricked up their ears and snorted. Horpyna, who rode at the head of the cavalcade, growled, half to herself, and half aloud, some unintelligible words like a Satanic pater.

When they arrived at the end of the pass, she turned and said:

"It is all right now. I had to restrain them with a charm for they were very hungry."

Every breast uttered a sigh of relief. Bohun and Horpyna again rode on in front; but the Cossacks who shortly before had held their breath began to whisper and talk to one another. Each one remembered some former adventures with spirits and ghosts.

"If Horpyna were not here, we should never get through," said one of the men.

"She is a great sorceress."

"And our Ataman is not afraid of 'didkas.' He saw nothing, he heard nothing; he was only looking round at the young lady."

"If what happened to me had happened to him, he would not feel so safe," answered the sergeant.

"And what happened to you, Father Ovsivuy?"

"I was riding once from Reimentarovki to Hulaypol. It was at night and I was passing by a graveyard. Suddenly, I saw something spring from one of the grave-mounds to my saddle-cloth. I looked round. It was a deathly pale child. The Tartars had probably taken it from its mother to sell it as a slave and it died on the way unbaptized. The eyes shone like two candles; it moaned and moaned. It sprang from the saddle-cloth to my neck and I felt that it was biting me behind the ear. Oh, God! A vampire! . . . But I had served long in Wallachia, and, there, there are more vampires than people; but there is a protection against them. I sprang from my horse and stuck the blade of my sword into the earth. Perish! I cried. The Vampire moaned, seized the blade, and glided down it under the ground. I traced a cross on the earth with my sword and rode away."

"Then there are a great many vampires in Wallachia, father?"

"Every other Wallach changes into a vampire after his

death, and the Wallachian vampires are the worst of all. They call them there Brukolaks."

"And which is stronger, father, a 'didka' or a vampire?"

"A didka is stronger, but a vampire is more tenacious. If you know how to manage a didka, it will serve you, but the vampire is good for nothing; it only scents blood. But a didka is its ataman."

"And Horpyna rules the didkas."

"It must be so. As long as she lives, she will rule them Why, if she had no power over them, the Ataman would not give his darling up to her; for the vampires thirst for maiden's blood above all."

"I have heard that they cannot do anything to the souls of the innocent."

"Not to the soul but to the body."

"It would be too bad for the beauty! She is like milk and blood. Our little father knew right well what to capture in Bar!"

Ovsivuy clacked his tongue.

"I cannot blame him. The golden Polish girl."

"I am sorry for her, father," said the young Cossack. "When we laid her in the litter, she folded her little white hands and prayed and prayed, 'kill me,' she entreated! 'Do not ruin me; wretched one!' "

"No evil will happen to her!"

Further conversation was interrupted by the approach of Horpyna.

"Hey, Cossacks," said the seeress, "this is the Tartar plain, but do not be afraid. Only once a year, do they have a bad night here; and the Devils' Glen and my abode are close at hand."

Presently, the sound of dogs barking was heard. The cavalcade stepped into the entrance of the glen, which lead down almost perpendicularly from the banks of the river and was so narrow that four riders abreast could hardly pass along it. At the bottom of the glen was a spring, which gleamed in the moonlight as it hurried to meet the river. As the cavalcade advanced, they found that the walls of the cave widened out and enclosed a roomy, level space which was shut in on all sides by rocks. Here and there were trees. No breath of wind stirred their leaves. Long, black shadows from the trees fell on the ground. In the spaces lighted by the moon, gleamed white, round or longish objects, which the horrified

Cossacks recognized as human ribs and skulls. They looked round mistrustfully, crossing themselves from time to time on breast and brow. A light suddenly flashed in the distance between the trees and, at the same moment, two large, ugly black dogs approached, howling and barking at the sight of the men and horses. On hearing Horpyna's shouts, they were soon pacified and walked round the horsemen growling.

"These are not dogs," whispered the Cossacks. "These are not dogs," grunted old Ovsivuy, in a tone which evinced his conviction.

Behind the trees, a shanty, and behind it a stable, and then a dark building appeared. The shanty looked outwardly neat and roomy. The windows were lighted.

"That is my dwelling," said Horpyna to Bohun. Yonder is the mill which grinds no wheat but our own; but I am a prophet, and prophesy from the water above the wheel. I will also prophesy for you. The young lady must go into the stranger's room but, if you wish to make it pretty, we must take her over to the other side first. Stop here, and dismount."

The cavalcade came to a standstill. Horpyna began to call:

"Cheremis! Huku! Cheremis! Huku!"

A form, holding a bundle of pitch-pine shavings in his hand, stepped before the house and, raising this flaming wood in his hand, silently observed those present. It was an old, ugly, gray-haired man; almost a dwarf in stature; with a flat, square face and slanting eyes.

"What kind of a devil are you?" asked Bohun.

"You must not ask him," said the giantess, "His tongue is cut out."

"Come nearer."

"Listen," said the woman, "perhaps we can take the young girl into the mill, the Cossack will be trimming up the guest-room and hammering nails into the walls and that will wake her up."

The Cossacks had dismounted and were carefully unfastening the litter. Bohun, himself, watched everything with the greatest anxiety and himself bore the end of the litter towards the head, as they carried her into the mill. Karzel went on ahead holding the pitch-pine torch. The princess, who was still sleeping from the effect of the draught which Horpyna had prepared for her from soporific herbs, did not

awake; though her eyelids twitched from the glare of the torches which lighted up her face with a rosy glow. Perhaps she was being soothed by wonderful dreams, for she smiled sweetly whilst they carried the litter, though it resembled a funeral procession. Bohun gazed at her. He felt as though his heart would burst his ribs. "My darling, my darling," he whispered softly and the stern, though handsome, face of the chief became gentle, and glowed in the reflection of the great love which had taken him captive, and which forged his fetters ever more firmly; as the wild steppes are gradually overspread by flames from the embers which the traveller has forgotten to extinguish.

Horpyna, who was walking beside him, said:

"When she awakes from this sleep she will be well."

"God be praised! God be praised!" answered the chieftain.

Meanwhile, the Cossacks had begun to take the packs off the six horses before the door of the cabin, and to unpack the pieces of furniture, rugs, and other treasures that they had plundered in Bar. A good fire had been made in the guest-room and while some of the men continued to bring fresh rugs and draperies, the others fastened these on the wooden walls. Bohun had not only thought of a safe cage for his bird, but also determined to adorn it, so that the bird should not find captivity too unbearable. He soon came back from the mill and, himself, superintended the work. The night was passing; the moon was withdrawing her pale light from the summits of the rocks; and the muffled sounds of the hammers was still to be heard. The simple peasant room was transformed more and more into a habitable chamber. At length, when the walls had been completely covered, and everything put in order, the sleeping princess was brought back and laid upon soft cushions. Then, all was quiet. Only in the stables were heard, for a time, through the silence, loud bursts of laughter, resembling the neighing of a horse. This was the young sorceress, who was joking before the fire with the Cossacks and distributing blows and kisses among them.

CHAPTER II.

The sun was already high in the heavens when the princess awoke and opened her eyes. Her glances fell first on the ceiling of the room and from thence wandered around the room. Her awakening consciousness struggled with the remains of her sleep and her dreams. Astonishment and uneasiness were visible in her face. "Where was she? How had she got here? In whose power was she? Was she dreaming or was she awake? What meant this luxury that surrounded her? What had happened to her up to this time?" At this moment, the dreadful scene of the taking of Bar suddenly came vividly before her vision. She remembered everything. The slaughter of the thousands; people, nobles, citizens, priests, the religious people and children—the blood-stained heads of the "blacks," the heads and necks round which were twined reeking entrails, the noise of the drunken people; the day of judgment of the completely-destroyed town—and then, Bohun's appearance and her abduction. She remembered also that, in a moment of despair, she had stabbed herself with her own hand; and a cold perspiration broke out on her forehead. Perhaps the knife had glided aside, for she felt only a slight pain; and, at the same time, she felt that she was alive, that health and strength were returning; and, lastly, she remembered that they had carried her a long, long distance in a litter. "Where was she now? Was she in a castle? Rescued, freed, in safety?" and here, her looks wandered around the room. The windows were like those in a peasant's cabin, small and square. One could not see through them for they were made of thin skin instead of glass. Was this truly a peasant's cabin. But that could not be, for the splendor of its furniture contradicted such a supposition. Instead of a ceiling, the girl saw above her a canopy of crimson silk, embroidered with gold stars and moons. The walls, that were not any too large, were covered entirely with draperies. On the floor, lay a rug, woven in various colors; as though it were strewn with fresh flowers.

The mantelpiece was covered with Persian taffeta. Everywhere was gold fringe, silk, velvet; from the ceiling and the walls to the very cushions on which her head rested. The bright daylight which penetrated the covering of skin in the litlte windows gave some light, but was lost in the crimson, the purple, and the sapphire of the velvet, and seemed to make a rainbow-like twilight. The princess was bewildered; she could not trust her eyes. "Is this magic? Or have the hosts of Prince Yeremy rescued her from the Cossacks and placed her in a princely castle?"

The girl folded her hands.

"Holy Virgin, grant that the first face which appears at the door may be that of a protector and a friend."

Just then, through the heavy gold embroidered portière, there came to her ears, as from a distance, the sound of a lute and, to its accompaniment, a voice sang a song that she knew well:

"Love for Thee is worse than sickness;
Sickness is a passing ill;
And life may yield fresh joy and hope,
But Love's wound Time ne'er can heal."

The princess raised herself on her couch, but, the more she listened, the wider did her eyes open with terror—finally she gave a frightful scream and threw herself back into the cushions, as if she were dead.

She had recognized Bohun's voice.

But her scream had, at any rate, pierced the walls of the guest room; for, presently, the heavy curtain was moved aside and the chieftain himself appeared on the threshold. Helena covered her eyes with her hands and her pallid lips repeated, as in a fever:

"Jesus Maria! Jesus Maria!"

And yet, the sight that terrified her so, would have rejoiced the eyes of many a girl; for a radiance fairly streamed from the face and apparel of this young Cossack. The diamond buttons of his doublet glistened like the stars in the sky; his dagger and sabre flashed with jewels. His coat, made of silver lace, and the red Kontush, with the slashed sleeves, heightened the beauty of his tawny face. He stood thus before her, slender, black eyed, magnificent; the handsomest of all the young men of the Ukraine.

But his eyes were sad, like stars that are veiled by clouds, and he looked almost humbly at her; and, as she saw that

the expression of fear did not leave her face, he began to speak, in a low, sad voice:

"Fear nothing, Princess!"

"Where am I, where am I?" she asked, looking at him through her fingers.

"In a safe place, far from the war. Fear nothing, thou, my beloved soul! I brought thee here from Bar that neither the people nor the war might do thee any injury. The Cossacks left no one alive; you, alone, came away alive."

"What am I doing here? Why do you pursue me?"

"I pursue you! My God!" And the chieftain folded his hands and shook his head, like a man who has suffered a great wrong.

"I am dreadfully afraid of you."

"Why do you fear me? If you command me, I will not move from the door. I am your slave. It is enough for me to remain here, on the threshold, and look into your eyes. I am not going to do you any harm. Why do you hate me? Oh, gracious God! At sight of me, you stabbed yourself with a dagger, although you had known me a long time and knew that I came to rescue you. I am not a stranger to you, but a dear friend; and, yet, you stabbed yourself with a knife, Princess!"

The pale cheeks of the girl became suddenly crimson.

"Because I preferred death to disgrace," she said. "And I swear, that, if you do not respect me, I will kill myself; even if I should lose my soul's salvation!"

The eyes of the girl flashed fire. The chieftain saw that there was no trifling with this princely Kurtsevich blood, which, in its excitement, would carry out whatever it threatened; and he knew that the girl would aim the dagger more surely the second time than the first.

So he answered nothing, but walked forward two or three steps to the window, and sat down on a bench covered with gold embroidery, and hung his head.

There was silence for a while.

"You can rest in peace," he said, "as long as I am sober, as long as the gorzalka does not mount to my head; so long, you will be to me as a statue of a saint in the churches. And, from the time I found you in Bar, I left off drinking. Before that, I drank, drank to drown my sorrow in gorzalka. What could I do? But now, neither sweet wine nor gorzalka passes my lips."

The princess was silent.

"I will look at you;" he continued, "gladden my eyes with the sight of your rosy cheeks, and, then, I will go."

"Give me back my freedom," said the girl.

"But you are not a prisoner? You are mistress here. And whither would you go? The Kurtseviches are dead; the villages and settlements are destroyed by fire; the prince is not in Lubni. He is marching against Khmyelnitski and Khmyelnitski against him. Everywhere is war, shedding of blood, everywhere are Cossacks, hordes and soldiers. Who will protect you? Who take care of you, if not I?"

The princess raised her eyes. Then it occurred to her, that there was still someone in the world who would take her to himself and defend her; but she would not name him, for fear of awaking the terrible lion. At the same time, a deep sorrow filled her heart. Was he still alive whom her soul longed for? As long as she remained in Bar, she knew that he was alive; for, immediately after Zagloba's departure, the name of Skshetuski came to her ears, together with the news of the victories of the terrible Prince. But how many days and nights had pasesd since that time! How many fights, how many dangers might have overtaken him! She could now only get news of him through Bohun, whom she dared not and would not ask.

She buried her head in her pillow.

"Then I must remain here a prisoner?" she asked moaning. "What have I done to you that you should pursue me like misfortune?"

The Cossack raised his head and began to speak, so softly that one could hardly understand him.

"What thou hast done to me—I do not know; but I do know that if I am thy fate, thou art also mine. If I did not love thee I should be as free as the wind of the fields, with a heart free from care, with a free soul and famous as Konashevich Sahaydachny himself. Thy cheeks are my fate, thine eyes are my fate; neither free will nor Cossack honor are any longer dear to me. What did I care for beauty until you grew from a child to a maiden! Once, I took a galley, on board of which were the most beautiful girls, destined for the Sultan; and not one of them won my heart! The Cossack-brothers played with them, and then I had a stone tied round the neck of each one and had her thrown into the water. I feared no one; no one dared attack me. I went to

the war against the heathen, took booty; and, as the prince is in his palace, so was I on the steppes; and to-day—here I sit, a slave, entreating for a kind word from you; and I may not have it, and have never had it—not even then, when girl, if you treated me differently, if you had ever treated me differently, all this would not have happened that has happened. I would not have killed your relations; I would not have joined the disaffected peasants; but, through thy unkindness I have lost my reason. Thou mightest have led me whither thou would'st. I gave thee my blood, my soul; now, I am stained with the blood of the nobility. Formerly, I killed only Tartars, and brought home booty for thee that thou might's walk in gold and jewels, like God's cherubim. Why did'st thou not love me then? Oh heavy, heavy does repentance weigh on my heart. I may not live with thee; and, without thee, I canot live! Not at a distance, not near, not on the mountains, not in the valleys—thou, my beloved, my little dove! But pardon me, that I came for thee to Rozloga in the Cossack fashion with sword and fire. But I was drunk with anger towards the princes, and, on the road, I drank gorzalka—I, unhappy murderer, and then, when thou fleddest from me, I howled like a dog, and my wounds pained—I would not eat, and I called my mother, Death, to take me away—and thou would'st that I should now give thee up to lose thee again, my darling my little dove!"

Bohun interrupted himself; his voice was choking and he was almost sobbing; and Helena's face grew first white, then red. The more intense the love that spoke in Bohun's words, the greater was the abyss that opened before the girl, a bottomless abyss without hope of escape.

When the Cossack had paused awhile, he collected himself and then continued:

"Demand what thou wilt! See how this room is adorned! This is all mine, this is booty from Bar. I brought it here for thee from Bar, on six horses. Ask what thou wilt—yellow gold, rich dresses, bright jewels, humble slaves! I am rich, I have enough property. Khmyelnitski will not grudge it nor will Kshyvonos. Thou shalt live like the Princess Vishniovyetski. I will conquer palaces for thee; will give thee half of the Ukraine for, even if I am a Cossack, not a nobleman, I am an bunchuk ataman. Ten thousand soldiers are under me, more than under Prince Yeremy. Ask what thou wilt if thou wilt only not leave me, darling, and learn to love me!"

THE PRINCESS RAISED HERSELF ON THE COUCH.

The princess raised herself, pale as death, from her cushion; but her sweet, beautiful face bore the impress of such an unyielding will, of so much pride and power, that, at this moment, this dove resembled a young eagle.

"If you are waiting for my answer," she said, "know, that should I be forced to pass my whole life moaning in captivity, I would never love you, so help me God!"

Bohun underwent a struggle with himself.

"Do not say such things to me," he said in a hoarse voice.

"And do not speak to me of your love, for I am ashamed of it; it insults and angers me! I am not for you."

The chieftain rose from his seat.

"And for whom then, Princess Kurtsevich? To whom would you belong in Bar, if I had not been there."

"He who saved my life to disgrace and imprison me is my enemy and not my friend."

"And do you remember that the peasants would have killed you? It is frightful to think of it. . . . "

"The dagger would have killed me. You snatched it from me."

"And I will not give it back to you, for you must be mine!" said the Cossack exploding.

"Never, I prefer death!"

"You must and you shall!"

"Never!"

"Well, if you were not wounded, after what you said to me to-day, I would this very day send some soldiers to Rashkov and have a monk brought hither by the hair of his head; and, to-morrow, I would be your husband. What then? Is it not a sin not to love one's husband? Ha! Gracious lady, so, the Cossack's love insults you and makes you angry? Who are you then that I should be to you as a peasant? Where are your palaces, your Boyars, your soldiers? Why are you insulted? Why are you angry? I took you in war, you slave! Oh, if I were a peasant, I would teach you wisdom with a whip upon your white back, and satisfy myself with your beauty without the assistance of any priest. If I were a peasant, and not a knight!"

"Heavenly angels, save me!" whispered the princess.

Meanwhile, rage became more and more apparent in the face of the Cossack. Anger seized him by the hair.

"I know why it insults you, why I am distasteful to you! You are saving your maiden honor for another; but nothing

will come of it, as true as I live, as true as I am a Cossack. For that mangy nobleman, that miserable Pole; death and destruction to him! He hardly looked at you, had hardly turned you round once in the dance, when you were completely infatuated with him! And thou, Cossack, suffer and break thy head! But I will catch him and I will flay him alive and nail him up. Know, that Khmyelnitski is marching against the Poles, and I am going with him; and I will find your dove, even if he were under the earth. And when I come back, I will at once throw his head on the highway under foot."

Helena had not heard the last words of the ataman. Pain, anger, her wound, excitement, fear, had robbed her of her strength, and intense weakness took possession of her limbs. Her sight failed and her thoughts became confused. She fainted.

Bohun stod there, awhile, pale with anger, foam on his lips, when, suddenly, noticing this lifeless, powerless form, with her head hanging helplessly, an unearthly cry escaped his lips.

"It is all over with her, Horpyna! Horpyna! Horpyna!"

And he fell to the ground. The giantess came hurrying to the guest room.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Save her! Save her!" cried Bohun, "I have killed her—my soul, my light!"

"Are you crazy?"

"I have killed her, killed her!" groaned the warrior, wringing his hands.

But Horpyna, approaching the princess, soon saw that she was not dead, but in a dead faint; and as soon as she got Bohun got out of the room, she began to restore her.

After a while, the princess opened her eyes.

"Well dearie, there is nothing the matter," said the witch, "one can see that you were frightened at him and lost consciousness; but the fainting-fit is over and your health will come back. You are as sound as a nut and will live a long time and enjoy happiness."

"Who are you?" asked the princess in a weak voice.

"I? Your servant, for so he commanded."

"Where am I?"

"In the Devil's Hollow. It is an absolute wilderness. You will see no one here but him."

"Do you live here too?"

"This is our farm. I am Dontsovna; my brother commands a squadron under Bohun; he has good Cossacks. And I stay here, and will keep you in this golden room. The cabin is turned into an enchanted castle. It fairly glitters. He brought all this here for you."

Helena looked sharply into the bright face of the girl. She appeared to be perfectly sincere.

"And will you be good to me?"

The white teeth of the witch gleamed as she laughed.

"I will, indeed! Why should I not," she said. "But you must be good to the ataman. He is a falcon, a famous young soldier. He will. . . . "

Here the witch leaned over and whispered something into Helena's ear, and then broke into a loud laugh.

"Away!" screamed the princess.

CHAPTER III.

Two days later, in the morning, Dontsovna sat with Bohun beneath a willow near the mill-wheel and looked at the foaming water.

"You will watch her, will protect her, will not let her out of your sight, so that she shall never leave the Hollow!" said Bohun.

"Towards the side of the river, the ravine has a narrow opening, but here it is roomy. Let the entrance be filled with stones and we will stay here as if we were at the bottom of a well. If necessary I can find a way out."

"What do you live on here?"

"Cheremis plants corn behind the rocks. He also plants grape-vines and catches birds in nets. With all that and what you have brought we have no lack of anything except bird's milk. Do not fear, she will not escape from the ravine and no one will find out that she is here unless some of your people gossip it."

"I have sworn them. They are all faithful Cossacks. They will not talk, although one should flay them. But you said yourself that people often come here for you to tell their fortunes."

"Sometimes they come from Rashkov; sometimes, when they know about me, from God knows where; but they stay by the river. You saw those bones. There were some who tried to come in. There lie their bones."

"You killed them?"

"Who killed them, killed them. Whoever wishes to have his fortune told, must wait outside the hollow; and I go to the mill-wheel. Whatever I see in the water I go and tell him. I will look for you in a minute, but I do not know if I shall see anything; for one cannot always see."

"As long as you do not see anything evil."

"If it is something evil you will not ride away from here. It would be better if you did not leave."

"I must. Khmyelnitski sent me a letter to Bar to tell me

to come back and he gave Kshyvonos the same orders. Now that the Poles are marching toward us with a large force we must keep our forces together."

"And when will you come back?"

"I do not know. There will be a great battle; greater than any we have had. Either we shall die, or the Poles. If they beat us, I will hide myself here; but if we beat them, I will come for my little bird and drive with her to Kiev."

"And if you fall?"

"That is why I've come to you to tell my fortune. I want to find out."

"And if you fall?"

"Our mother has borne us but once."

"Bah! bah! And what shall I then do with the girl? Shall I wring her neck, or what?"

"If you lay a hand on her I will have you impaled by oxen." The officer reflected gloomily.

"If I fall, tell her to think of me."

"Oh, the ungrateful little Pole! To think that she should not love you in return for so much love. If it were I, I would not be so contrary. Ha! Ha!"

With these words, Horpyna punched him twice in the side with her fist and showed him all her teeth as she smiled.

"Go to the devil!" said the Cossack.

"Now, now! I know that you are not for me."

Bohun stared into the foaming water above the wheel as if he himself could read his own future.

"Horpyna," he said presently.

"What?"

"Will she fret for me when I am gone?"

"If you will not make her your own Cossack fashion perhaps it is better that you should go away."

"I will not; I cannot; I dare not. I know she would die.'

"Then it is better for you to go. As long as she sees you, she cannot bear you; but, when she has stayed here with me and Cheremis for one or two months, she will begin to like you better."

"If she were well, I know what I would do. I would let a priest come from Rashkov and I would marry her; but now I am afraid that, if she should be frightened, she would die. You saw that yourself."

"Let be. What good would the Priest and the marriage do you? No, you are no true Cossack. No! I will not have any

priest or any other minister here. In Rashkov the Tartars from Dobrudja are stationed. They would attack us and, if they should come, you would never see the princess again. What have you got into your head? Go away, and come back again."

"And you, look into the water and tell me what you see. Tell me the truth and do not lie, even though you should see me dead."

Dontsovna approached the trough and raised the second sluice that shut off the water from the mill-wheel. The flood poured with double force over the wheel which went round faster and faster, until it was completely enveloped in spray. Curdling foam gathered beneath the wheel, as from boiling water.

The fortune-teller fixed her dark eyes on that foaming water and, seizing her long braids that hung down behind her ears, she began to cry out:

"Huku! huku! Show thyself! In the oak wheel, in the white foam, in the bright spray, good, or bad, show thyself."

Bohun approached and sat down beside her. His face betrayed anxiety and feverish curiosity.

"I see," screamed the witch.

"What dost thou see?"

"The death of my brother; two oxen are dragging Dontsa to the stake."

"To the devil with your brother!" growled Bohun, who wanted to find out something else.

For a time one heard only the rattle of the wheel, which was turning madly.

"My brother's head is blue, quite blue. The ravens are pecking him," said the witch.

"What else do you see?"

"Nothing! Oh, how blue he is! Huku! huku! Show thyself! In the oak wheel, in the white foam, in the bright spray! I see. . . . "

"And what?"

"A battle. The Poles are fleeing before our soldiers."

"And I? Am I pursuing them?"

"I see you, too. You are fighting with a small knight. Hur! hur! hur! Beware of that little knight."

"And the princess?"

"She is not there. I see you again. Some one is with you who has betrayed you. Your false friend."

Bohun devoured with his eyes, first the foaming water, then Horpyna; and racked his brain to explain the prophecy.

"What friend."

"I do not see. I do not know if he is old or young."

"Old; quite old!"

"Perhaps he is old."

"Then I know who he is. He has already betrayed me once; an old nobleman with a grey beard and a white eye. Death and destruction to him! He is not my friend."

"He is spying on you. I see him again. Wait! The princess is there, too, with a coronet on her head, in a white dress; and, above her, is a hawk.'

"That is I."

"Perhaps it is you. . . . A hawk. . . Or a falcon? . . . It is a hawk!"

"It is?"

"Wait. There is nothing more to be seen. In the oak wheel, in the white foam. . . Oh! Oh! a crowd of soldiers, numerous as the trees in the forest, numerous as the thistles in the steppes and you, above them all; and they are carrying three bunchuks before you."

"And is the princess with me?"

"No, she is not there. You are in the camp."

Again, they were silent for a few minutes. The wheel whirled round so that the whole mill trembled.

"Ha! What is all this blood? So much blood! So many corpses, wolves and ravens among them. A pestilence comes from them. Nothing but corpses! Nothing but corpses! Far away in the blue distance, one sees nothing but corpses, nothing but blood."

Suddenly, a gust of wind blowing across the wheel swept away the cloud of spray and, at the same time, above them in the mill, the ugly Cheremis appeared, with a bundle of wood on his back.

"Cheremis, put down the sluice," cried the girl.

And then she went to wash her hands and face in the brook. The dwarf meanwhile put down the sluice and stemmed the water.

Bohun sat still in thought, and only the approach of Horpyna roused him.

"You saw nothing else?" he asked.

"I told you whatever appeared and could see nothing more."

"And were you not lying?"

"By my brother's head, I spoke the truth. They were going to impale him. With his feet tied to oxen, they will have him dragged to the stake. I am sorry for him! But he is not the only one who is doomed to death. How many bodies I saw! I have never seen so many. There is going to be a great war on the earth!"

"And so you saw me with a hawk over my head?"

"Yes, I did."

"And she had on a coronet?"

"A coronet and a white dress."

"And how do you know that I am this hawk? I told you about the young Pole, the nobleman, perhaps it is he?"

The girl frowned and reflected.

"No," after a while she said, shaking her head. "If it were a Pole, there would be an eagle."

"Thank God! Thank God! I am now going to the servants to tell them to get the horses ready and we will set out this night."

"Yes, it is necessary that you should go."

"Khmyelnitski has commanded it and Kshyvonos has commanded it. You saw rightly that there is going to be a great war, for I saw that in Bar, and also in Khmyelnitski's letter."

Bohun really could not read, but he was ashamed to acknowledge it, for he did not wish to appear uneducated.

"Well then, go," said the witch. "You are fortunate, for you will become a hetman. I saw above you three bunchuks, as clearly as I see these fingers."

"I shall be a hetman and marry a princess! It would not be suitable for me to marry a peasant girl."

"You might speak differently to a peasant girl, but you are ashamed of yourself before this one. You ought to be a Pole."

"I am not inferior to a Pole."

Then Bohun went into the stable, to the servants; and Horpyna began to cook the dinner.

By evening, the horses were ready for the journey; but the chieftain was not in a hurry. He sat in the guest room upon a pile of rugs, with a lute in his hand, and looked at the princess who had already left her couch, but had taken refuge in the other corner of the room and was telling her beads softly. She paid no more attention to Bohun than if he were not there. He, on the contrary, followed her every movement with his eyes, caught, with his ears, her every sigh—and knew not how he could bear it. He constantly opened his

lips to begin a conversation, but his throat seemed choked. The pale, quiet face, with a certain expression of sternness around the mouth and brow, robbed him of courage. He had formerly never remarked this expression in her face. Involuntarily, the remembrance of similar evenings in Rozloga came to his mind, and a vivid picture of the Kurtseviches and himself, sitting round the oak table. The old princess was pulling the leaves off the summer roses; the princes were throwing dice, and he was watching the beautiful princess, just as he was now watching her. But, then, he was happy; then, she would listen to his stories of military expeditions with a zither in her hand, her black eyes resting on his face and her parted cherry lips showing with what interest she listened.

Now, she did not even look up. Formerly, when he played the lute, she would listen and look up at him, till his very heart melted. And yet, wonder of wonders, now, he was her master; he had taken her by force. She was his booty, his slave, he could command her—and nevertheless, he was formerly far nearer to her and felt himself far more her equal. The Kurtseviches were like brothers to him and she, their sister, was for him not only the beloved of his heart, the falcon, the dearest black-eyed girl; but, also, almost a relation. And, now, she sat there before him, a proud, gloomy, silent and merciless mistress. Anger took possession of him. He would show her what it meant to despise a Cossack! But he loved this merciless mistress; he would pour out his blood for her and, whenever fury possessed him, it seemed to him as though an unseen hand seized him by the forelock, as though a voice called into his ear, "Halt!" Presently, he broke into a violent fury, and then he dashed his head against the floor. The reason was this: The Cossack was filled with anguish; he felt that he was a burden to her in this room. If she would only smile on him once, say one kind word to him, he would fall at her feet—and then ride to the devil; to drown his sorrow, his anger and his feeling of humiliation in the blood of the Poles. But, here, he felt as though he were the slave of this princess. If he had not known her formerly, and known that she was a Polish lady of one of the first noble families, he would have had more courage—but she was the Princess Helena, whose hand he had sued for from the Kurtsevichi; for whom he would give Rozloga and all that he possessed. And the greater his shame before her at being a peasant the less is his daring.

Time pressed. From outside came the buzz of conversation from the servants, who were probably sitting in their saddles, awaiting the ataman who was suffering such tortures. The bright flame from the pitch-pine lighted up his face, his rich mantle, his lute—and the princess. If she would only cast one glance in his direction; The ataman felt bitterness, anger, oppression; he also felt foolish. He wished to take a touching farewell and feared that the parting would not be what he so longed for; he feared that he must leave her in bitterness, anger and pain.

Oh, if it were not the Princess Helena, who had wounded herself with the dagger; who would like now to kill herself; who was so dear to him, so dear to him, and all the dearer, the prouder and more cruel she showed herself!

A horse neighed outside the window. The chieftain gained courage.

"Princess," he said, "it is time for me to leave."

Helena was silent.

"And you do not bid me God speed."

"God speed," she said earnestly.

The Cossack's heart throbbed. She had said what he wanted, but he would have liked to hear it said in a different tone.

"Now I know," he said, "that you are angry with me; that you despise me. But I can tell you one thing; that another would have treated you worse than I have done. I brought you here because I could not do otherwise, but what harm have I done you? Have I not treated you as was becoming? Like a king's daughter? Say yourself! am I such a villain that you cannot give me one kind word? And yet, you are in my power."

"I am in God's power," she said, as earnestly as before; "but, as you have restrained yourself in my presence, I am grateful to you."

"Well, then, I will go with only this word of farewell. Perhaps you may repent; perhaps a longing will come over you."

Helena was silent.

"I am sorry to leave you here alone," said Bohun, "sorry, also, that I must go away; but it must be. It would be easier for me if you should give me a blessing on my journey. What can I do to conciliate you?"

"Give me back my freedom, and God will forgive you everything, and I will also bless you."

"Well, perhaps that may happen yet," answered the Cossack. "Perhaps you may yet regret that you have treated me so cruelly."

Bohun wanted to buy a leave-taking, even if with a half promise, which he had no intention to fulfil and gain his end, for a ray of hope beamed in Helena's eyes and the expression of sternness melted from her face. She folded her hands on her breast and looked at him with a cheerful face.

"Would you? . . . . "

"I do not know," said the Cossack softly, for shame and compassion were striving for the mastery. "I cannot now, I cannot. Hordes are encamped in the wild fields; divisions of the army are marching in every direction. The Dobrudja Tartars are marching here from Rashkov. It cannot be, now, for I am afraid—but when I come back. . . . I am a little child in your presence. You do what you will with me. . . . I do not know, I do not know." . . . .

"May God and the Holy Virgin protect you. God be with you."

She stretched out her hand to him. Bohun sprang towards her and pressed her hand to his lips. Then, suddenly raising his hand, an earnest look came into his face, and he let fall her hand. Going towards the door, he bowed himself repeatedly in the Cossack manner, and disappeared behind the portiere. Presently, a louder hum was heard outside. The clatter of weapons and then the words of a song sung by several voices.

> **"I shall be the bravest of all the brave,**
> **Among the Cossacks, among my friends,**
> **Through long, long years until the end of the world."**

The voices and the sound of hoofs were presently lost in the distance.

CHAPTER IV.

"God has already worked a manifest miracle in her behalf," said Zagloba to Volodiyovski and Podbipyenta, in Skshetuski's chamber. "A manifest miracle, I say, when he helped me to rescue her from the hands of those dogs, and protected her along the whole journey. Let us trust that he will once again have compassion on her and on us. If she is only alive! But something whispers to me that he has stolen her again, for mark, gentlemen, as the informer told us, he has been made the second in command, next to Pulyan, under Kshyvonos. May the Devil take him! Therefore he must have been at the taking of Bar."

"Perhaps he did not find her among the crowd of unfortunate ones. There were twenty thousand killed there," said Volodiyovski.

"You don't know him. I would swear that he knew she was in Bar. I am convinced that he saved her from the slaughter and has taken her away somewhere."

"You do not give us much comfort or hope; for, in Skshetuski's place, I would rather see her dead than let her remain in those vile hands."

"And that is no comfort for, even if she be dead, she has been wronged."

"It is enough to make one desperate," said Volodiyovski.

"Yes, to make one desperate," repeated Longin.

Zagloba twirled his moustache and his beard and then he burst forth:

"Ah! May they get the scabs, the whole of this dog's brood. May the heathen make ropes of their guts! God has made all kinds of men, but they were made by the devil—such sons, Sodomites. May they be devoured by wild beasts."

"I did not know this sweet maiden," said Pan Michael sadly, "but I would rather that misfortune should pursue me than her."

"I have seen her only once in my life; but when I think of her I am so sad that I do not care to live," said Pan Longin.

"If that's how you feel," cried Zagloba, "how do you suppose I feel, who loves her as my own daughter and have brought her safely through so many dangers—how do you suppose I feel!"

"And how does Pan Skshetuski feel?" asked Volodiyovski.

Thus despairing, the knights presently became silent.

Zagloba was heard first:

"Can no one advise anything?" he asked.

"If nothing can be done, it is our duty to avenge her," answered Volodiyovski.

"God grant that we may have a battle," sighed Pan Longin.

"They say that the Tartars have already crossed the river and have struck camp in the Wild Lands."

"It must not be," said Zagloba. "We cannot forsake the poor girl without doing something to help her. I have dragged my old bones far enough in this world. It would be better for me if I could find rest somewhere, could stretch myself out in some bakery, to get warm; but, for the sake of this poor thing, I would travel far, even to Stambul, though I had to put on a peasant's jerkin and carry a lute; a lute, which I cannot look at without abomination."

"You are so clever. Can you not think out a plan how we can help her," said Podbipyenta.

"I have already thought of several plans. If only half of Prince Dominik's men were as devoted as I am, Khmyelnitski would long ago have been disemboweled and hung up by his feet on the gallows. I have already spoken to Skshetuski about it, but just now one can do nothing with him. Sorrow has completely unmanned him, and is wasting him more than an illness. Watch him, that he may not lose his reason. It often happens that a great sorrow will make the mind ferment like wine, until it finally becomes sour."

"It often happens, often happens," said Longin.

Pan Volodiyovski moved back and forth uneasily and said:

"What remedy are you thinking of?"

"My remedy! Well, first we must try and find out if the poor girl, the beautiful creature—may the holy Angels keep her from harm—is still alive; and we can do that in two ways. We may find among our Cossacks true and safe men, who will undertake to go over to the Cossacks, in appearance only, but in reality to mingle among Bohun's soldiers and try to find out something from them."

"I have Russian dragoons," interrupted Volodiyovski. "I can find such men among them."

"Wait a minute! . . Or we will take prisoner some of the rascals who took Bar and see if they do not know anything. They all look to Bohun as to a rainbow, so impressed are they with his devillish spirit. They sing songs about him—may their throats rust—and one relates to another what he has done, or what he has not done. If he has taken our poor child prisoner they will not hide it.

"We can send men to make inquiries and take a prisoner as well," remarked Pan Podbipyenta.

"You've struck it. The chief thing is for us to find out if she is alive. Then, as soon as you gentlemen desire to help Pan Skshetuski with a true heart, place yourselves under my command; for I have the most experience. We will disguise ourselves as peasants and try to find out where he has hidden her. Once we know that, I will lay my head we shall get her. Skshetuski and I have the most at stake, for Bohun knows us both; and, should he recognize us—our own mother would not know us again. But he has not seen either of you."

"He has seen me," said Podbipyenta, "but that makes no difference."

"Perhaps God will deliver him into our hands," said Pan Volodiyovski.

"I do not want to see him at all," continued Zagloba. "May the hangman delight in his countenance! We must go to work carefully, if we do not wish to spoil everything. It is impossible that he should be the only one who knows of her hiding-place, and it is safer to ask some one else about it."

"Perhaps our men whom we send out will find out for us. If the prince will only allow me, I will choose the most reliable and will send them out to-morrow."

"The prince will allow it, sure enough; but I doubt whether they will find out anything. Listen, gentlemen, something has just occurred to me. How would it be if, instead of sending out men we should dress ourselves as peasants and undertake the journey ourselves."

"Oh, no, that will not do," cried Pan Volodiyovski.

"Why will it not do?"

"You cannot understand military service. When the regiments, without exception, stand ready for battle, it is a sacred thing. Though father and mother should be on their deathbed, no soldier would demand leave of absence; for that would be the most dishonorable thing that a soldier could do, just before a battle. After the battle is fought and the enemy

scattered, one may do it, but not beforehand; and remember, Pan Skshetuski, himself, may have the greatest wish to do the same, but he would not stir. He longs to go, the Prince loves him; and yet, he says not a word, because he knows his duty. This, gentlemen, is public duty, the other is private duty. I do not know how it is elsewhere, although I judge that it is the same everywhere. But, with our prince, it was never the custom to ask leave before a battle, not even for the officers. And, though Skshetuski's heart should break, he would not approach the prince with such a proposition."

"He is a Roman and a stickler for form, I know that," said Pan Zagloba, "but if anyone should whisper a word to the prince, he would probably grant him and you leave willingly."

"Such a thing would not occur to him. The prince is responsible for the whole Commonwealth. What are you thinking of? It is a question here of matters of grave importance, which concern the whole nation, and a private consideration would have no weight with him. And, even if he should voluntarily grant leave—which however it quite improbable—as God is in Heaven not one of us would now leave the camp, for we are bound in honor to serve our unhappy country in the first place, and not to think of our own interests."

"I know that also. I know and understand the service from early times; and, therefore, I say to the gentlemen that this idea only came into my mind, but I did not say that it had taken root there. Besides, to tell the truth, we could not do much even that way, as long as the power of those rascals is not defeated; but if they are beaten and pursued, and have to save their own throats, then we can boldly go among them and easily get information from them. If the rest of the army would only join us as soon as possible! Otherwise, we shall grieve ourselves to death near this Cholhanski Kamyen. If our prince only had the chief command we should have gone away long ago. But it is easy to see that Prince Dominik likes to rest quite often as he is not here yet."

"He is expected in three days."

"God grant that it may be as soon as possible. Is it not true that the Cup-Bearer is to come to-day?"

"So it is said."

At this moment the door opened and Pan Skshetuski stepped in. His face appeared to be petrified with sorrow, such a chill and stillness seemed to come from him.

This young face, so stern and earnest, was a strange sight. A smile never lighted it up and it seemed as if death itself would not alter him much. His beard had grown long, halfway down to his waist; his raven black hair showed a few silver threads.

His companions and friends divined his sorrow, though he tried not to let it be perceived; otherwise, he was perfectly conscious, apparently calm; and more zealous than before in his military duties, and quite occupied with the approaching battle.

"We were just speaking of your misfortune, and it is also ours," said Zagloba, "for, God is our witness, that nothing can give us any comfort. But it would be sterile sympathy if we only helped you to shed tears. So we have decided to shed our blood for the sake of the dear one, if she is still on the earth, and to rescue her from prison."

"May God reward you," said Skshetuski.

"We will go with you even into Khmyelnitski's camp," said Pan Volodiyovski, looking anxiously at his friend.

"May God reward you," repeated Pan Yan.

"We know," said Zagloba, "that you have sworn that you will find her, dead or alive; and we are ready, even this very day. . . ."

Skshetuski had seated himself on a bench with his eyes cast to the ground and said nothing. Zagloba was quite annoyed.

Could he intend to give her up? he thought. If he does, may God be with him. I see there is neither gratitude nor remembrance in the world; but there are others who will save her. Let them do it, for I would sooner draw my last breath.

Absolute silence reigned in the room and was only broken by a sigh from Pan Longin. Meanwhile little Volodiyovski approached Skshetuski and shook him by the shoulder.

"Where do you come from," he asked.

"From the prince."

"And what's the news?"

"I am going to-night on an expedition."

"Are you going far?"

"As far as Yarmolints, if the road is clear. Volodiyovski looked across at Zagloba. They understood each other at once.

"That is the way to Bar," growled Zagloba.

"We will go with you."

"You must ask for leave and find out if the prince has laid out any other work for you."

"We will go together. I have something else I wish to ask him."

"And so have we," said Zagloba.

They rose and went out. The prince's quarters were at some distance, at the other end of the camp. They found the front room full of officers from the different regiments; for soldiers came hither from all parts of the country to the Cholhanski Kamyen to offer their services to the prince. Pan Volodiyovski had to wait a long time before he and Pan Longin could appear before the prince, but Yeremy at once gave them permission to set out themselves, and to send out dragoon spies, who should pretend to desert from the camp and go over to Bohun's Cossacks and hear what these had to say about the princess. To Volodiyovski, he said:

"I am thinking up new duties for Skshetuski, for I see that he is buried in his sorrow and that it is consuming him. I am unutterably sorry for him. Has he said nothing to you about her?"

"Very little. At first, he started up and wanted to go blindly into the midst of the Cossacks; but he remembered that the regiments without exception were in readiness for war, and that we were in the service of our country, which must be saved before all else; and that is why he did not come to see your highness. God only knows what is passing in his mind."

"This has hit him hard. Watch him, for I see you are a faithful friend to him."

Pan Volodiyovski bowed low and left the room and, at this moment, the Voyevoda of Kiev with the Starosta of Stobnitski, with Pan Denhof the starosta of Sokalski, and other dignitaries, entered the prince's quarters.

"How goes it?" asked Pan Skshetuski.

"I am going with you, but, before that, I must go to my regiments, for I am to send several men away."

"Let us go together."

They went and, with them, Pan Podbipyenta, Zagloba and old Zatsvilikhovski, who was also going to his regiment. Not far from the tents of Volodiyovski's dragoons they met Pan Lashch who was rolling along, rather than walking, at the head of some nobles; for, like his companions, he was perfectly drunk. Zagloba sighed as he saw him. They had

become acquainted and grown to like each other at Konstantinov, from the fact that they had similar characters and were alike as two drops of water. Pan Lashch, although he was an awe-inspiring knight, feared by the Heathen, as were not many others, was at the same time a noted drunkard, glutton, and dice thrower, who, in the intervals of fighting, praying, duelling and slaughtering, loved nothing better than to be in the company of such men as Zagloba, to drink for all he was worth and to listen to anecdotes. He was a brawler of the first water, who, of his own self, created so much disturbance and so often transgressed the law that, in any other country, he would long ago have lost his head. Many sentences were hanging over him but, even in times of peace, he did not pay much attention to them and during war he forgot them completely. He had joined the prince at Rosolovtsa and had done him no small service at Konstantinov; but, from the moment they began to rest in Zbaraj, he became more and more unendurable from the disturbances that he constantly created. It may be remarked at the same time, that no one could have told or have written down how much wine Zagloba had drunk with him; how much he had talked to him, how many stories he had told him, to the great joy of the host, who invited him to come there every day. But since the news of the taking of Bar, Zagloba had become earnest; he had lost his humor, his vivacity and no longer visited the commander. Pan Lashch had begun to think that this jolly nobleman had left the army and gone elsewhere, when he suddenly came across him. He stretched both hands out towards him and said:

"Well met, sir, why do you never come to see me? What are you doing?"

"I am keeping Pan Skshetuski company," answered the nobleman in a melancholy tone.

Pan Lashch could not bear Skshetuski because he was so serious and he called him "The Sedate." He knew of his unhappiness, for he had been at that dinner in Zbaraj when the news of the taking of Bar had been brought; but, as he was naturally a man of unrestrained feelings and was also drunk, he did not know how to respect the sorrow of others and, seizing a button of the lieutenant's coat, he said:

"So you are weeping for your girl. Was she pretty? What?"

"Let me alone, good sir," said Skshetuski.

"Wait a minute."

"As I am under orders I cannot stay."

"Wait a minute," said Lashch, with the obstinacy of a drunken man. "You may be under orders, but I am not; no one can command me."

And then he repeated the question in a lower voice:

"Was she pretty? What?"

The lieutenant frowned.

"I must tell you, good sir, that it will be better not to re-open the wound."

"Not to open the wound? Do not be afraid! If she is pretty she is alive."

Skshetuski's face grew deathly pale, but he controlled himself, and said:

"Sir, do not oblige me to forget to whom I am speaking."

Lashch opened his eyes very wide.

"What does that mean? You threaten me? You? Me? On account of a wench?"

"Go your way, Pan Lashch," thundered old Zatsvilikhovski trembling with rage.

"You creatures, you grey-coats, you pack of servants, screamed the commander. "Gentlemen, draw your swords," and, drawing his, he sprang towards Skshetuski. But at that moment it was knocked out of his hand by Pan Yan and flew like a bird into the air, while its owner, who had lost his balance, from the force of the blow, fell over and lay full length on the ground. Skshetuski did nothing further but remained standing still, white as death, as though he were stunned. Meanwhile, a tumult arose. From one direction came the commander's soldiers and from the other direction Volodiyovski's dragoons, like a swarm of bees from a hive. There were loud cries of "Fight! fight!"

Many who came running up did not know what it was all about. Their swords clashed. At any moment, the tumult might have turned into a general fight. Fortunately Lashch's companions had noticed that an increasing number of Visniovyetski's soldiers were arriving on the spot. They were becoming sobered by fear, and, seizing the commander they fled with him.

It is certain that if Pan Lashch had been dealing with less well-disciplined soldiers he would have been cut into small pieces. But old Zatsvilikhovski needed only to cry "Stop!" and all swords disappeared in their sheaths.

Nevertheless, the whole camp resounded with the noise; and the echo even reached the ears of the prince, especially as Pan Kushel, who was on duty, dashed into the room in which the prince was having an interview with the Voyevoda of Kiev, the starosta of Stobnik and Pan Denhov, and cried:

"Your Highness, the soldiers are fighting with swords."

At that moment, the commander, pale and almost unconscious with anger, fell like a bomb into the room.

"Your Highness, justice!" he cried. "In this camp, things are going on just as they do with Khmyelnitski. No respect is paid to blood or rank. The officials of the crown are struck with swords. If your Highness will not exercise justice and sentence the guilty ones to be hanged, I must see to it myself."

The prince sprang from his seat at the table.

"What has happened? Who attacked you, good sir?"

"Your officer, Skshetuski."

The greatest astonishment was visible in the countenance of the prince.

"Skshetuski!"

Suddenly the door was opened and in stepped Zatsvilikhovski.

"Your Highness, I was a witness," he said.

"I did not come here to give an account of it but to demand punishment," cried Lashch.

"The prince turned towards him and, looking at him fixedly, said, quietly and impressively:

"Slowly! slowly!"

There was something so awe-inspiring in his eyes and in his quiet voice that Pan Lashch, although noted for his great boldness, was suddenly silent, as though he had lost his speech; and the other gentlemen were almost frightened.

"Speak," said the prince to Zatsvilikhovski.

Zatsvilikhovski related the whole story. That Pan Lashch had ridiculed, in a manner unworthy not only of a dignitary but also of a nobleman, the sorrow of Pan Skshetuski and had then sprung upon him with his sword, and, with remarkable moderation for his years, the lieutenant had merely satisfied himself with knocking the sword out of his opponent's hand. The old man concluded as follows:

"And your Highness well knows that, although I am in my seventieth year, no lie has ever passed my lips and never shall, as long as I live. I could not under oath change one word of my statement."

The prince knew that Zatsvilikhovski's words were as true as gold and he knew Pan Lashch equally well; but he did not answer. He took a pen and began to write. When he had finished, he said, looking at Pan Lashch:

"You shall have justice, gracious sir."

The commander wished to say something, but it seemed as if words were wanting and he put his hands to his sides, bowed and went proudly out of the room.

"Zelinski," said the prince, "give this note to Pan Skshetuski."

Pan Volodiyovski, who had not left the lieutenant's side, was rather uneasy when he saw the prince's boy come into the room. He was certain that they would have to appear before the prince at once, but the boy left the letter without a word and went out. Skshetuski read it and handed it to his friend.

"Read it," he said.

Pan Volodiyovski glanced at it and cried:

"A promotion!"

And, putting him arm round Skshetuski's neck, he kissed him on both cheeks. The colonel's full dignity in a hussar regiment was almost the highest rank. The prince himself was captain in the regiment in which Skshetuski served, and Pan Suffchynski from Siench was nominally colonel; but he was an old man and had long since retired from active service. Skshetuski had for some time performed the duties of both positions, which often occurred in other regiments where the two chief positions were often only by courtesy or honorary positions. The king, himself, was captain of the royal regiment and the primate himself was captain of the primate's regiment. The officers in both regiments, high court officials, also served actually as lieutenants and colonels. Such a lieutenant or rather colonel was Skshetuski, but there was a great difference between the mere exercise of the duties, between the honorary dignity and the real rank. At this instance, however, through this appointment, Skshetuski had become one of the first officers of the Voyevoda of Russia.

But, while his friends were shouting for joy and wishing him happiness on his promotion, Skshetuski's features remained fixed and calm; his face bore the same petrified, stern expression. For there were no dignities nor honors in the world that could now cheer him or give him any happiness. He rose, however, and went to thank the prince, and little

Pan Volodiyovski went to his own quarters, rubbing his hands.

"Well, well," he said, "to be appointed colonel of a hussar regiment; that very seldom happens to such a young man; indeed never!"

"If God would only give him back his happiness," said Zagloba.

"Did you notice that he did not move a muscle?"

"He would willingly resign," said Longin.

"I do not wonder, sir," sighed Zagloba. "I would give my five fingers here for her, although I took a flag with them."

"Yes, indeed, yes!"

"Then Pan Suffchynski must have died," remarked Volodiyovski.

"Probably he is dead."

"Who will then get the lieutenancy? The ensign is so young and only saw his first service at Konstantinov."

This question remained undecided, but Colonel Skshetuski himself brought the answer:

"Sir," he said, turning to Popbipyenta, "the prince has appointed you lieutenant."

"Oh God! Oh God!" groaned Longin, holding his hands as if for prayer.

"He might just as well have appointed his Lithuanian mare." growled Zagloba.

"Well, and the expedition?" asked Pan Volodiyovski.

"We are to start without delay," answered Skshetuski.

"How many men has the prince commanded us to take?"

"A Cossack and a Wallachian squadron, altogether five hundred men."

"Ha! That is a military expedition not a scouting party; but, if that is the case, it is time to set out."

"Let us set out! Let us set out!" repeated Zagloba. "Perhaps God may help us to get some news."

Two hours later, as the sun was setting, the four friends rode away from the Cholhanski towards the South. Almost at the same moment the commander with his men left the camp. A number of officers from the different regiments, came to see these last set out, amid cries and insults. The officers formed a circle round Pan Kushel who was telling them the reason why this man had been sent away and how it had happened.

"I brought him the prince's order," said Pan Kushel, "and,

believe me, honored sirs, it was an important errand; for, when he read it, he began to below like an ox when he is branded. He wanted to spring on me with his battle-axe and I wondered that he did not strike me. But it seems that he saw through the windows Pan Korytski's Germans, who were surrounding his quarters, and my dragoons, with their muskets in their hands, and then he began to shout:

"Well, well; I will go if I am driven out. I will go to Prince Dominik who will receive me kindly. I will not," he continued, "serve among beggars any longer, but I will revenge myself,' he screamed, 'as true as I am Lashch, and I will get satisfaction from that creature!' I thought he would choke with rage and he chopped the table in several places with his axe. And I must tell you, honored sirs, that I am not sure that some evil may not happen to Pan Skshetuski, for one cannot trifle with Pan Lashch. He is a hard, proud man who never let an insult go unpunished, and he is courageous; and, besides that, he is a 'dignitary.'"

"What could happen to Skshetuski while under the protection of the prince?" said one of the officers, "although he might be capable of anything this Pan Lashch, he would certainly respect the prince's mighty hand."

Meanwhile, the lieutenant not dreaming of the designs which Pan Lashch had formed against him, was riding at the head of his division and getting farther and farther away in the direction of Ojygovtsa towards the Bug and Medviedovki. Although September had dyed all the leaves yellow, the night was as clear and warm as in July, as it had been almost for the whole year. For there had been hardly any winter and, in Spring, everything had blossomed out at once where, in other years, deep snow lay on the steppes. After a very wet summer, the early autumn months were dry and mild, with clear days and bright nights. They rode forward therefore, at a good pace; not especially carefully, as they were still too near the camp to fear an attack. They rode fast, the lieutenant at their head with several horses; and, with him Volodiyovski, Zagloba and Longin.

"Look, gentlemen, how the moonlight lies on the hill. One could almost swear it was daylight. There is a saying that it is only in war times that we have such nights, so that the souls that leave their bodies may not strike their heads against the trees in the dark, like sparrows, against the beams in a barn; and may find their way more easily. This is Fri-

day, too, the day of the Lord, on which no poisonous vapors rise from the ground, and no evil spirits can approach men. I feel happier and a ray of hope is dawning in my soul."

"The best of all is, that we finally got away and are trying to do something to rescue her," said Pan Volodiyovski.

"And the worst thing is to remain in one place with your sorrow," said Zagloba, "as soon as one has mounted his horse, despair falls gradually from one's shoulders, until it is finally completely shaken off."

"I do not believe," whispered Volodiyovski, "that one can shake off everything, for example, a feeling which has fastened itself in your heart like a leech."

"If it is sincere," said Longin, "it conquers you, even if you fight with it as you would with a bear."

Longin relieved his pent up feelings by a deep sigh, that resembled a puff from a blacksmith's bellows. Little Volodiyovski, however, raised his eyes to heaven as if he would search the very stars that were also beaming on Princess Barbara.

The horses of the whole company began to sno.. and the riders answered them with "Sdrov, Sdrov!" (Health! health!) Then all was silent until a melancholy voice in the rear began sing:

"Thou marchest to war, poor little one
Thou marchest to war!
Thy nights in the open sky,
Thy days sultry."

* * * * * * *

"Old soldiers say that, when horses snort, it is a sign of good luck. My deceased father used to tell me that," said Volodiyovski.

"Something tells me that we are not riding on a fool's errand," answered Zagloba.

"God grant that comfort may come to the colonel's breast," sighed Longin.

Zagloba turned round and nodded his head, like a man who cannot get rid of his thoughts. Presently he said:

"Altogether there is something quite remarkable in my mind and, in any case, I must tell you my thoughts, for I cannot endure them any longer. See here, have you not noticed that for some time, Skshetuski—I do not know, I may be mistaken—but it seems to me as if he thought less than any of us about rescuing that poor girl."

"What are you talking about!" answered Volodiyovski. "That is only his temperament. He will never betray his feelings."

"He was always that way."

"That does not matter now. Do you remember, sir, when we gave him some hope, he only said 'God reward you. Me and you!' as indifferently as though it were a question of anything else in the world. And God knows, it is black ingratitude on his part; for, how the poor thing longed for him, and how she cried on his account, would more than cover an ox-hide with writing. I witnessed it myself."

Pan Volodiyovski shook his head.

"It cannot be that he has given her up," said he, "although it is true that when we first saw him, when that devil had taken her from him in Rozloga, he was so desperate that we feared for his reason. But he is much more rational now. It is better if God has given him strength and peace in his soul. As his true friends we ought to be glad of it."

As he said this, Volodiyovski put spurs to his horse and rode forward to join Skshetuski, while Zagloba remained some time in silence beside Pan Podbipyenta.

"Do you not think with me that if it were not for love, there would be much less wickedness in the world?"

"Whatever God has ordained will come to pass," answered the Lithuanian.

"Oh, you never stick to the point. This is something totally different. Why was Troy taken? Eh? Will not this war be carried on on account of fair tresses? Khmyelnitski longed for Chaplinski's wife, or perhaps Chaplinski wanted Khmyelnitski's wife and, on account of their sinful desires, we twist necks."

"That was a dishonorable love, but there is a nobler kind which, thank God, is the more usual."

"Now you answer more sensibly. Will you soon begin to work in that vineyard. I heard that some one tied a scarf round you when you set out for the war."

"Little brother, little brother!" . . .

"But the three heads are in your way. What?"

"Ah, yes, indeed."

"Well, then, I will tell you what: Make one good stroke and cut off at a blow the heads of Khmyelnitski, the Khan, and Bohun."

"If they would only put themselves in my way," answered

Longin, his eyes turned to heaven and his voice trembling with emotion.

Meanwhile, Volodiyovski rode beside Skshetuski and looked at his deathlike face which gazed silently from under his helmet, until he presently pushed his stirrup against Skshetuski's.

"Yan," he said, "it is a pity that you give yourself up to your reflections."

"I am not thinking, I am only praying," answered Skshetuski.

"That is a holy and praiseworthy occupation, but you are not a monk that you should occupy yourself entirely with praying."

Pan Yan slowly turned his martyr face to Volodiyovski and asked, in a dull voice full of lifeless resignation:

"Tell me, dear Michael, what is left for me but to pray?"

"It remains for you to rescue her," answered Volodiyovski.

"I will do it—to my last breath, but, even if I find her alive, will it not be too late? God help me. I could bear anything else, but not that. God save my reason. I desire nothing further than to snatch her from those accursed hands. Then, she may seek refuge where I shall also seek it. It was evidently not the will of God. . . . Let me pray, Michael, and do not reopen my bleeding wounds." . . . .

Volodiyovski's heart was oppressed. He would willingly have comforted him, have whispered hope; but the words would not pass his lips, so they rode on in gloomy silence. Skshetuski's lips moved quickly in prayer, by which means he endeavored to drive away his dreadful thoughts, and the little knight was really frightened when the moonlight shone on that face; for it seemed to him as though it were the very face of a monk, wasted by penance and fasting and mortification.

" Thou shalt find after the war is over,
poor little one,
Thou shalt find after the war is over
Desolation at home
And your body full of wounds.

CHAPTER V.

Pan Skshetuski made an effort to advance in such a way that he and his men might rest by day in the woods and ravines carefully stationing numerous sentinels around them, pushing forward at night. Wherever they approached a village, he generally surrounded it so that none could come out. He collected provisions, food for the horses, and, above all, he gathered news of the enemy; then he moved onward without doing the people any harm. After he had left, however, he soon changed his route so that the enemy might not be able to find out in the village in what direction he had gone. The object of the expedition was to learn whether Kshyvonos was besieging Kamenets with his forty thousand men; or, if he had given up the useless seige and gone to help Khmyelnitski, so as to fight a decisive battle; and, also to find out whether the Tartars of the Dobrudja were doing, whether they had already crossed the Dniester and united with Kshyvonos, or if they were still on the other side. This was very important information for the Polish camp, and the Commanders themselves should have striven to gather it. As, however, it never came into their minds, for they were inexperienced, the Voyevoda of Russia took his burden upon himself. Should it turn out that Kshyvonos with the hordes of Byalogrod and Dobrudja had given up besieging the hitherto impregnable Kamenets and have joined Khmyelnitski, it would be necessary to attack the latter as soon as possible, before his power had reached its fullest extent. Meanwhile, the general of the army, Prince Dominik Zaslavski-Ostrogski did not hurry himself and, when Skshetuski set out, he was not expected in the camp for two or three days. He was probably carousing on the way, as was his custom, and was enjoying a good time; and meanwhile, the moment was passing, in which Khmyelnitski's power could be broken. And Prince Yeremy despaired at the thought, that if the war was carried on any longer in this manner, not only Kshyvonos would reach Khmyelnitski with the Tartar hordes from the Dniester, but

even the Khan, himself, with all his forces from Perekop, Nohay, and from Azov.

There were even rumors in the camp that the Khan had already crossed the Dnieper and was marching, day and night, with two hundred thousand horse; and still Prince Dominik did not arrive. It became more and more probable that the army that was stationed at the Cholhanski Kamyen would have to encounter a force of five times its size and if the commanders suffered defeat, would no longer be able to hinder the enemy from penetrating into the very heart of the Commonwealth to Cracow and Warsaw.

Kshyvonos was the more dangerous because, in case the commanders should try to make their way into the heart of the Ukraine, he could go directly from Kamenets towards the north, to Konstantinov, and thus cut off their retreat. And they would, in any case, be between two fires. Therefore Pan Skshetuski resolved not to wait for news of Kshyvonos but to check him. Quite carried away by the importance of his task, on the success of which depended the fate of the whole army, the lieutenant joyfully risked his life and that of his soldiers. But this undertaking might be considered the act of a madman if the young knight had intended with his five hundred men to attack Kshyvonos' division which had been strengthened by the addition of the hordes of Byalogrod and Dobrudja.

But Pan Skshetuski was much too experienced a soldier to undertake any such folly. He knew well that, in case of a battle, within an hour a wave of men would be riding over the dead bodies of himself and his companions; so he thought of other plans. First he spread the news among his soldiers, that they were going out as an advance guard of the whole division of the terrible Prince; and his news was told from mouth to mouth in all the country seats, villages, and little towns through which they had passed. It spread with the speed of lightning along the shores of the Zbrucha, Smotrycha, Studzienicy, Uushki, Kalusiku, and, following their course, reached the Dniester and beyond there, as if wafted by the wind, from Kamenets to Yahorlik. It was repeated by the Turkish pashas in Khotsim, by the Zaporojians in Yampol, and by the Tartars in Rashkov; and the well-known cry "Yeremy is coming!" resounded everywhere, and filled with terror the hearts of the rebels, who trembled with horror, and never felt secure by day or night.

And no one doubted the truth of the rumor. It seemed quite natural that the commanders should attack Khmyelnitski and that Yeremy should attack Kshyvonos; such was the situation. The latter believed it himself and let his hands fall inactive at his sides.

What should he do? Go to meet the prince? His forces were greater at Konstantinov and a different spirit ruled the "blacks;" and, yet, they were beaten, their ranks broken to pieces and they hardly escaped with their lives. Kshyvonos was convinced that his Cossacks would fight like madmen with any other army of the Commonwealth, under any other leader; but at the approach of Yeremy's army, they would all fly asunder like a flock of swans before an eagle, like the thistledown of the steppes before a wind.

To wait for the prince at Kamenets was still worse. Kshyvonos resolved to turn towards the East, and go as far as Bratslav, to dodge his evil genius and to try and reach Khmyelnitski. It was certain that by making this detour he would not reach Khmyelnitski as soon as he ought, and in time to fight; but he would hear the results and, besides, have time to think of his own safety. Meanwhile, the wind bore other news; that Khmyelnitski had been killed. Skshetuski was the first to spread the rumor. The unlucky Kshyvonos did not know at first what he ought to do.

He decided, finally, to turn in the direction of the East and to penetrate as far as possible into the steppes. Perhaps he might come across Tartars and take refuge with them. Before all things, however, he wanted to be certain; so he sought carefully among his officers one who was reliable and fearless enough for him to send out with a detachment to gain information. The choice was difficult. There were not many who had any desire for such an enterprise, and for this mission one needed a man who would not let himself be compelled through the torture of fire, the fear of the stake or the wheel, to utter a word regarding Kshyvonos' plans of flight.

Finally Kshyvonos found one.

One night he sent to Bohun and said to him:

"Listen, Yurku, my friend! Yeremy is marching towards us with a large army and we, unhappy ones, are lost."

"I also heard that he was coming. We spoke of it, little father, before now; but why should it be all up with us."

"We cannot conquer him, we might another, but not Yeremy. The Cossacks are afraid of him."

"But I am not afraid of him—I conquered one of his regiments, the other side of the Dnieper."

"I know that you do not fear him. Your fame as a Cossack, as a warrior, may well compare with his fame as a prince; but I cannot give him battle, for my people will not. Do you not recollect what they said at the council? How they all wanted to attack me with their swords because I, as they said, wanted to lead them to a butchery?"

"Well, let us go to Khmyelnitski. There we shall get blood and men."

"They say that Khmyelnitski has already been beaten by the commanders."

"I do not believe that, Father Maxim. Khmyelnitski is a fox; without the Tartars he would not dare attack the Poles."

"I agree with you, but we must have certainty. If anyone who was not afraid of Yeremy would set out with some scouts and try and take a prisoner who could give us news I would give him a cup full of red golden crowns."

"I will go, Father Maxim, not for the sake of the red gold, but for the glory of a soldier and of a Cossack."

"You, the second Ataman under me, you will go? You will certainly yet be the first ataman of the Cossacks and have good soldiers under you, for you do not fear Yeremy. Go, you falcon, and then ask what you wish. I will say to you that if you were not going, I should go myself; but I must not."

"You must not, for, if you should go, father, the soldiers would cry out that their commander had fled; and they would scatter themselves all over the world. But, if I go, they will gain fresh courage."

"And what escort shall I give you?"

"I will not take many men. It is easier to hide and to creep about with a small number. But give me five hundred brave, young fellows and I will wager my head on it that I will bring you some prisoners with information, not any chance ones, but soldiers from whom you may learn everything."

"Start at once. In Kamenets they are already firing cannon for joy to welcome the Poles, who will destroy us, innocent ones."

Bohun left and began at once to get ready for his journey. His men were drinking, as was the custom on such occasions, for slaughter in case Mother Death should take them. And he drank with them till he foamed at the mouth and raged

and stormed. And then he had a barrel of tar opened and, just as he was fully dressed, he threw himself into it, dived about in it twice so that his head was covered and called out:

"I am black as Mother Night. Poles' eyes will not recognize me."

And then, after he had rolled about in Turkish rugs that he had taken as booty, and rubbed the tar off to some extent, he sprang upon his horse and rode off, followed by his faithful warriors in the shadow of the darkness.

"To honor! To happiness!"

In the meantime Skshetuski had already reached Yarmoliets. There he had met with resistance, had bathed the inhabitants in blood; and, after he had informed them that on the following day Prince Yeremy would arrive, he allowed his weary soldiers and horses to rest. He assembled his comrades for a council and said to them:

"So far God has led us safely. I have remarked also, from the terror which seems to have seized the peasantry, that they take us for the advance-guard of the prince and believe that the whole army is following us, but we must be careful they do not observe that we are only one party going everywhere."

"And how long shall we have to go thus?" said Zagloba.

"Until we find out what Kshyvonos has determined to do."

"Pshaw! Then we shall probably not get back to the camp in time for the battle."

"That is possible," answered Skshetuski.

"I am not at all satisfied, sir," said the nobleman, "our hands got somewhat into practice on the rebels at Konstantinov. We beat a few men there, but that is like a fly for a dog. My fingers itch for more. . . . "

"You may perhaps enjoy more battles, here, than you think," answered Skshetuski earnestly.

"Oh, how's that?" said Zagloba very uneasily.

"Because, any fine day, we may come across the enemy. And, although we are not here in order to get in his way with our weapons, still we shall be obliged to defend ourselves. But, to come to the point. We must cover a wider stretch of the territory, so that they may hear of us in different places at the same time, and we must here and there cut down those that withstand us, in order to spread fear, and to scatter the same rumor abroad. That is why I think we ought to divide our forces."

"I think the same," said Volodiyovski. "We want to make

ourselves seem as many as possible, in order that those who escape may give Kshyvonos news that hundreds of thousands are coming."

"Lieutenant, you are our leader. It is for you to command," said Podbipyenta.

"Well, I will go through Zinkov to Solodkovtsa, and if possible still farther," said Skshetuski. "You, Lieutenant Podbipyenta, will go straight out in the direction of Tatazysk, and you Michael ride to Kupin, and Pan Zagloba will ride to Zbrucha near Satanova."

"I?" said Zagloba.

"I have said it. You are a cunning man and full of good ideas. I thought you would like to undertake this command, but if that is not the case, Sergeant Kosmach may take the fourth division."

"He will take it, but under my command," cried Zagloba, on whom it suddenly dawned that he was to be leader of an especial division. "I merely asked because I was sorry to be separated from you."

"Have you had experience in military affairs?" asked Volodiyovski.

"Have I had experience! No stork had yet thought of bringing you as a present to your father and mother, when I was already leading larger divisions of scouts than these. I have served for an age in the army and would serve yet if it had not happened that a solitary biscuit had remained stationary in my stomach for three years. I was obliged to go on a pilgrimage to Galatz,—but I will tell you about this pilgrimage at some other time, for it is time now to set out."

"Start in at once, gentlemen, and spread the news everywhere that Khmyelnitski has already been beaten and that the prince has passed Roskirov," said Skshetuski. "Do not take any mean prisoner that you may chance to come across, but try and find some scouts from Kametets who can give you news about Kshyvonos, for those that we have taken give contradictory reports."

"If I could only meet Kshyvonos myself. If he would only take it into his head to ride out on a scouting expedition, I would give him pepper and ginger. Fear nothing, gentlemen, I will teach these vagabonds to sing, yes, even to dance."

In three days, we will meet again in Yarmolints, and now, each go your way," said Skshetuski, "and spare your men, gentlemen."

In three days in Yarmolints," repeated Zagloba, Volodiyovski and Podbipyenta.

CHAPTER VI.

As soon as Zagloba found himself alone at the head of his division, he began to feel uneasy, and even sad. He would have given a great deal if Skshetuski, Volodiyovski, or Longin had been at his side; all of whom he admired with his whole heart, with whom he felt perfectly secure and in whose valor and caution he believed blindly.

He rode gloomily, therefore, at the head of his men, looking mistrustfully round him on all sides, reviewing in his mind all the dangers that might happen to him, and growled:

"It would have been much more jolly if one of them had been with me. When God fits a man for anything he provides the work for him to do. The three ought to have been born horse-flies, for they love to be in the midst of blood. They are as happy in war as another would be with the pitcher, or as a fish in water. That is their business. Light bellies, but heavy fists. I have seen Skshetuski at work and know that he is an expert. He handles men as the monks do their prayers. That is his favorite trade. That Lithuanian, who has no head of his own and is looking for three strange heads, has nothing to lose. I am least well acquainted with the little fellow. To judge by what I saw at Konstantinov, and by what Skshetuski has said of him, he must be a hornet. Fortunately, he is not very far from me and I think it will be better for me to join him, for may the ducks tread me if I know which way I have to go."

Zagloba felt very much alone in the world, so much so that he began to pity himself.

"Yes, yes," he grunted, "each one has somebody upon whom they can depend and I—not a companion, no father, no mother; I am an orphan—but enough."

At this moment Sergeant Kosmach approached him.

"Commander, where are we going?"

"Where are we going?" repeated Zagloba, "what?"

Suddenly, he straightened himself in his saddle and twisted his moustache, "To Kamenets if I desire it! Do you understand, sir?"

The sergeant bowed and drew silently back to join his companions, without being able to understand why the commander should have been so angry. Zagloba, however, cast a few more threatening looks around him and then became calm and continued, to himself:

"If I go to Kamenets you may give me a hundred strokes of the bastinado, Turkish fashion. Tut! Tut! If only one of them were with me, I should feel more courage. What can I do with a hundred men. I would rather be alone and then I would trust my own judgment. Now, there are too many of us to be able to use craft, and too few to be of any service in defence. It was an unfortunate thought of Skshetuski's, to divide the patrol. And whither shall I go? I know what lies behind me, but who can tell me what lies before me and who can assure me that the devil has not laid a trap for me somewhere. Kshyvonos and Bohun are a nice pair. May the devil flay them alive! God preserve me from Bohun at least! Skshetuski is anxious to meet him. May the Lord grant his wish! I wish for him whatever he wishes for himself, for I am his friend, Amen. I will go to Zbrucha and come back to Yarmolints and bring him some spies; more than he wishes. There will be no trouble about that."

Kosmach approached him again:

"Commander, behind the rise, we can see some horsemen."

"May they ride to the devil! Where? Where?"

"There, behind the hill; I saw their pennants."

"Soldiers, then?"

"So it seems."

"May the dogs bite them! Are they many?"

"I do not know. They are still at some distance. If we were to hide behind these rocks, we might attack them unawares; as they must pass by here. If there should be many of them, Volodiyovski is not far off and he would hear the shots and come to our assistance."

Zagloba's courage suddenly increased and flew to his head, like wine. Perhaps despair may have given him this impulse for action. Perhaps, also, the hope that Pan Voldiyovski might be near by. In any case, he rolled his eyes frightfully, drew his word, that flashed, and cried:

"Hide behind the rocks! We will attack them unawares. We will show these scoundrels."

The prince's practised soldiers turned toward the rocks and placed themselves in readiness for a sudden attack.

An hour had already passed when the noise of approaching riders was heard. This was accompanied by the echo of joyous songs and, presently, those in hiding heard the sounds of a violin, of bagpipes, and of a little drum. The sergeant approached Pan Zagloba and said:

"Those are not soldiers, Colonel, not Cossacks. It is a wedding."

"A wedding!" said Zagloba, "I will play them a trick; you shall see." As he said this, he put spurs to his horse, the soldiers following him, and placed himself in the middle of the road.

"Follow me!" cried Zagloba. The column moved forward at a trot and then changed into a gallop and, when they came from behind the rocks, they stood still suddenly before the procession, who were frightened and confused at this unexpected sight.

"Halt! Halt!" was heard from both sides.

It was, indeed, a peasant's wedding. The bagpipes, the drummers and the fiddler rode at their head, with two jesters who were already half drunk, and were making jokes. Behind them came the bride, a fresh looking girl in a dark dress, with long hair hanging over her shoulders. She was surrounded by her bridesmaids, who were singing, and carried wreaths in their hands. All the girls rode astride; they were adorned with wild flowers and, in the distance, looked like a crowd of gaudy Cossacks. Behind them came the bridegroom on a big horse, surrounded by friends carrying wreaths on long sticks like pikes. The procession closed with the bridegroom's parents and the guests. All were on horseback; and the barrels of gorzalka, mead and beer were drawn in little wagons made of plaited straw, and the liquid gurgled on the rough uneven road in a most tantalizing manner.

"Stand still! Stand still!" was again heard from both parties and they fled to either side. The joyful band was in confusion. The girls gave a piercing shriek and drew back. The servants, however, and the older men sprang forward in order to protect the girls from the unexpected attack. Zagloba sprang forward close to them and, flourishing his sword right under the eyes of the terrified peasants, began to scream:

"Ha! You shrivelled blockheads, you dogs' teeth, you rebels! You want to mutiny! You belong to Krshyvonos

you ragamuffins! You are going out as spies! You are sending the soldiers in wrong directions! You are raising your hands against the nobles! I wil show you, you vile souls of dogs, I will have you placed on the block, impaled, oh, you rascals, oh, you heathen, you shall now pay for all your crimes!"

An old, white-headed wedding guest sprang from his horse, approached the nobleman, took hold of his stirrup, bowed low and said in a humble tone:

"Have mercy, illustrious knight, do not destroy us poor people. God is our witness! We are not going to rebel. We have just come from the church, from Hushiatyn, where we have just married our relation Dymitri the blacksmith to Xenia the cooper's daughter. We were just going to the wedding feast with the dancers."

"Those are innocent people, Sir," whispered the sergeant.

"Go away! They are rascals. They have been to a wedding with Krshyvonos," shouted Zagloba.

"May the plague take him!" cried the old man. "We never even saw him. We are poor people. Have mercy on us, illustrious Colonel. Let us go on. We are doing no harm to anyone and we know our duty."

"You will go to Yarmolints in chains."

"Wherever you like, sir! It is yours to command, ours to obey; but grant us one mercy. Command your soldiers not to harm us, and you yourself—pardon us simple people if we entreat you humbly—drink with us to the health of the married couple. Drink, your grace, to the welfare of us, simple people; as God and the Holy Gospel have commanded."

"Do not think that I will overlook anything even if I do drink," said Zagloba sharply.

"No sir," cried the old man joyfully, "we will not think it."

"Hey! Hey! musicians," he cried, "play for the illustrious Pole, or he is kind; and you boys, run and get the mead, sweet mead, for our illustrious gentleman. He will not do the poor people any harm. We thank the gentleman."

The young people set to work to open the barrels and during this time, the drums sounded, the fiddle squeaked, the bagpipers puffed out their cheeks and began to squeeze their bagpipes and the bridemaidens waved the wreaths at the end of their poles. When the soldiers saw this they came closer, twisted their moustaches and looked laughingly across the

shoulders of the young men, at the girls. The songs began afresh, fear disappeared and here and there one even heard joyous cries of "Uha! Uha!"

But Zagloba was not perfectly at ease; even when they brought him a quart of mead, he still growled, "Oh you rascals, you ragamuffins!" and, even when his moustache was plunged into the dark surface of the draught, he looked into the goblet gloomily. He raised his head and, blinking his eyes, tasted the mead. As he smacked his lips, astonishment but also anger were visible on his countenance.

"What times are these," he growled, "the mob drink such mead as this! God, thou seest this and dos not strike them with a thunderbolt."

As he said this, he raised the mug and emptied it to the bottom. The wedding guests, having gained confidence, now approached him all together, and prayed him not to harm them but let them continue their journey; and the bride Xenia, rosy and beautiful as the dawn, but trembling and with tears in her eyes, added her voice to the entreaties. She folded her hands and kissing Zagloba's yellow boot, she said:

"Have mercy on us, sir."

The nobleman's heart melted like wax.

Loosening his leather belt, he seemed to be looking for something, and finally brought forth the last golden crown that he prince had given him. Handing this to the girl, he said to her:

"Take this! God bless thee, as he does all innocence!"

His emotion prevented him from continuing, for this slender dark eyed Xenia reminded him of the princess whom Zagloba loved in his own way. "Where might the poor girl be now? Were the Hol Angels watching over her," he thought, and he was so moved that he was just in a mood to embrace them all as brothers.

The wedding guests, however, delighted at his generous treatment, began to shout and sing for joy, to press towards him and to kiss the flaps of his coat. "He is good!" they repeated, "A golden Pole. He gives us red gold, does not harm us, the kind gentleman. May he have glory and fortune!" The fiddler was dancing and playing his fiddle, the bagpiper's eyes seem starting from his head and the drummer's hands fell at his sides. The old cooper, evidently a born coward, who had kept himself in the background now pressed forward with his wife and the blacksmith's old wife,

mother of the bridegroom and, amid bowings, begged Zagloba to come to the wedding at the farm with them; as it would be a great honor for them to have such a guest and a happy omen for the young couple; and it would not be right not to come with them. The bridegroom and the black-eyed Xenia were also urgent in their entreaties; for the simple maiden had recognized at once that her people would derive the most benefit. And the bridesmaids said that it was not far to the farm; that the knights would not have to go out of their way; and that the old cooper was rich and could tap even better mead. Zagloba cast his eyes over his soldiers and saw that they were as anxious as hares for a little enjoyment and saw that the prospect of drink and dancing filled them with anticipation and delight. As, however, they did not dare to ask him on their own account, Zagloba took pity on them, and, in a few minutes, the wedding procession and the soldiers marched in the most beautiful harmony towards the farm.

It was, as they said, not very far off; and, as the old cooper was rich, the wedding feast was so abundant that they all got very drunk, and Zagloba became so merry that he took the lead in everything. Remarkable ceremonies were performed. The older women led Xenia into her bedroom and shut themselves in there with her. They remained there some time and when they came out alone and announced that the bride was like a dove, like a lily. Great joy immediately seized all those assembled and loud shouts arose of "To glory! To fortune!" The women clapped their hands and screamed, "What? Did we not say it?" The young men stamped their feet and danced about, singly, holding their drinking-cups in their hand; and, then, going to the door of the bedroom, emptied the cup crying, "To glory!" Zagloba also danced, upholding the dignity of his noble birth by drinking half a gollon of mead instead of a cupful. Then the old cooper and the blacksmith's wife led young Dymitri into the room and as he had no father they begged Zagloba to act in that capacity, to which he agreed at once and went in with them. Now the room became quiet. The only noise that was heard was made by the soldiers who were drinking in the courtyard before the house amid the Tartar cries of "Allah," and the firing of muskets. But the greatest joy broke forth when the parents came back into the room. The old cooper hugged the blacksmith's wife for joy. The young couple put their arms

round the feet of the the old cooper's wife and the women congratulated themselves that they had preserved their daughter as the apple of their eye like a little dove and as a lily, upon which Zagloba took her by the hand and led her out on the floor. They tripped about, opposite each other. He clapped his hands, bobbed down, with his knees turned out, then, suddenly bounded into the air, bringing his iron heels to the floor with such a clatter that splinters flew from the planks and great drops of perspiration came out on his forehead. Other couples followed their example and, when there was no room inside, they danced in the courtyard; the girls with the young men and the soldiers. The cooper tapped fresh barrels of mead. Soon, the whole wedding company went out into the court before the house. They lighted bundles of brier and pitch-pine, for it was already late and quite dark. The revelry had become a drinking-bout and the soldiers were firing off their rifles and muskets, as though they were in a battle. Pan Zagloba, his face crimson, soaking with perspiration and staggering, had completely forgotten what was going on. Through the smoke that surrounded him, he saw the faces of the revellers; but, if he had been threatened with a stake, he could not have told who they were. He remembered he was at a wedding,—but whose? "Ha! It was Skshetuski's wedding with the princess." This thought appeared to him the most probable, for he could not get it out of his head; and it filled him with such happiness that he began to shout as if he were possessed: "Long may they live! Gentlemen and brothers! Let us love one another!" and he emptied another half-gallon of mead. "Take your glasses, brothers! To the health of our illustrious prince! May all go well with us. If only this paroxsym might pass by!"

Here, he burst into tears and, as he walked towards the barrel, his gait grew more and more unsteady, especially as there lay on the floor a number of apparently lifeless bodies, as on a field of battle. "Oh God," cried Zagloba, "there are no more brave men in the Commonwealth; but one, Pan Lashch knows how to drink; the other is Zagloba—and the rest, O God! O God!" he turned his eyes sadly towards the sky, and noticed that the heavenly bodies no longer looked like golden buttons in the firmament, but some of them trembled as though they were about to spring from heir places; others described circles, and others seemed to be

dancing the "Cossack" opposite one another. Zagloba was more and more astonished and said to himself,

"Am I the only sober person in this world?"

But, presently, the earth seemed to tremble, just as the stars were doing. It turned round in a mad whirl, and Zagloba fell his full length on the ground. He was soon troubled with bad dreams. It seemed to him as if he had a mountain on his chest, which was crushing him to the ground and binding him hand and foot. At the same time, his ears were filled with a noise of what sounded like firearms. A blinding light flashed over his closed eyelids and hurt his eyes dreadfully. He tried to get up to open his eyes, but he could not; he felt that something unusual was happening to him; that his head was falling backward, as if it did not belong to him. Presently, a dreadful fear came upon him. He felt sick, very sick, very heavy. He soon regained his senses; but, strange to say, he was so intensely weak that he could not remember ever having experienced a similar sensation. He tried to move but could not do so. Then he became perfectly wide awake and opened his eyelids. As he did so, his eyes met another pair of eyes, that were fastened on him intently. They were coal-black eyes, and had such an evil expression that Zagloba, now perfectly wide awake, thought at the first moment that his Satanic Majesty was looking at him, and closed his eyes quickly; to open them again, just as quickly. These eyes continued to look at him obstinately—the face seemed familiar. Suddenly, Zagloba trembled, to his very marrow, a cold sweat covered him and all down his back thousands of ants seemed to be crawling.

He had recognized Bohun's face.

CHAPTER VII

Zagloba lay bound, his hands and feet trussed with his own sword, in the very room in which the wedding had taken place; and the terrible Chieftain sat beside him on a stool and looked with evident enjoyment at his prisoner's terror.

"Good evening, sir," he said, when he noticed his victim's eyes were opened.

Zagloba did not answer, but in a moment he was as sober as though no drop of mead ever passed his lips. Only a sensation, as if ants were creeping down to his heels and came back to his head, and the marrow in his bones seemed turning to ice. It is said that a drowning man at the last moment sees clearly his whole past; that he remembers everything, and is conscious of all that is happening to him. This bright vision and memory was Zagloba's experience at this moment; but the only evidence of this clairvoyance was the silent, unspoken cry:

"Now he will flay me!"

And the Chieftain repeated in quiet tones:

"Good evening, sir."

"Ugh!" thought Zagloba, "I wish he would fly into a rage."

"Do you not recognize me, noble sir?"

"I bow, I greet you! How is your health?"

"Not bad. And yours, I myself will take care of."

"I did not ask God for such a physician, and I doubt if I could digest your medicine; but God's will be done."

"Well, you cured me; Now I will repay you. We are old friends. Do you remember how you tied up my head in Rozloga? Eh?"

Bohun's eyes gleamed like two carbuncles and a horrible laugh came from his lips.

"I remember," said Zagloba, "that I could have stabbed you, and I did not do it."

"And I, did I stab you? or do I think of doing it? No, you are my friend, my beloved. I will guard you as the eye."

"I always said that you were a noble knight," said Zagloba,

pretending that he took Bohun's words in earnest; but at the same time the thought came into his mind, "I see that he is preparing something quite special for me. I shall not die any ordinary death."

"You have well said," sneered Bohun, "you are also a noble knight, we have sought and found each other."

"To tell the truth, I did not seek you, but I thank you for your kind words."

"You will thank me more, later, and I will thank you for taking the girl from Rozloga and bringing her to Bar where I found her. And now, I should like to ask you to the wedding; but it is not to-day nor to-morrow. Now it is war and you are an old man; perhaps you will not survive it."

In spite of the terrible position in which he found himself, Zagloba pricked up his ears:

"To the wedding?" he growled.

"And what do you suppose?" said Bohun. "Am I a peasant that I should take possession of her without a priest? Or, perhaps it might occur to me to be married in Kiev. You did not bring her to Bar for a peasant but for an ataman and a hetman. . . ."

"Good," thought Zagloba.

Then, turning his head towards Bohun, "Take those fetters off me," he said.

"Lie still! Lie still! You are going to take a journey and you're old and must rest beforehand."

"Whither are you going to take me?"

"You are my friend; I will take you to my other friend, to Kshyvonos. We will both see that you are well taken care of over there."

"It will be warm," growled the nobleman, and, again the ants began to crawl through his frame. Finally, he said:

"I know that you hate me, but unjustly, unjustly, God knows. We lived together and in Chigrin we drank many a bottle of wine together, for I took a fatherly interest in you on account of your knightly exploits; and you could not have found a better friend in the whole of Ukraina. And now, did I get in your way? If I had not ridden with you to Rozloga, we should be the best friends in the world to-day. And why would I have gone with you if I had not liked you? And if you had not been enraged you would not have killed those unfortunate people and, (God is my witness) I would not have opposed you. What do I care about other people's

affairs? I would rather you had the girl than any other but, amid your Tartar wooing, my conscience reproached me for that was a noble house. You yourself would not have acted differently. I could have put you out of the world, to my own advantage—and yet I did not do it because I am a nobleman and was ashamed of such an act. So be ashamed of yourself, for I know that you will avenge yourself on me. The girl is in your hands; what more do you want from me? Did I not guard her, your greatest treasure, as the apple of my eye. That you have not wronged her, is a proof that you also possess knightly honor and conscience. But how can you give her your hand that you have stained with my guiltless blood; how say to her, 'I have given over to torture that man who led you safely among the Tartars and through the peasant mob. You are yet young and do not know what may happen to you; and, for my death, God will punish you in what is dearest to you."

Bohun sprang from his stool, pale with rage, and, stepping up to Zagloba, said, in a voice choking with fury.

"You unclean boar! I will have straps torn from you, I will roast you on a slow fire, will drive nails in your body, and tear you in shreds."

And in a paroxysm of fury, he seized the knife that hung at his belt, held it convulsively in his grasp for a moment, and it was already flashing before Zagloba's eyes, when the chieftain grew calm again; put the dagger back in its sheath and cried:

"Cossacks!"

Six Zaporojians sprang into the room.

"Take this carcass, throw it into the pig-sty and guard it as the eye in your head?"

The Cossacks carried Pan Zagloba, two at his head and two at his feet and one by the back hair of his head and carried him out of the room across the yard and threw him upon a dung heap in a pig-sty that stood at a distance. Then they shut the door and the prisoner was left in the midst of total darkness, except for the cracks between the beams and the holes in the thatched roof a feeble light penetrated here and there. Zagloba's eyes soon became accustomed to the twilight. He looked about him, and noticed that in the pig-sty their were neither pigs nor Cossacks. But he heard distinctly the talking of the latter through all the four walls, evidently the whole building was surrounded closely. In spite of these guards, Zagloba breathed freely.

In the first place, he was alive. When Bohun flourished the knife over him, he was sure that his last hour had come. He had commended his ghost to God, for he was really in the greatest terror.

But Bohun had the intention of reserving him for a death of unheard of barbarity. He did not only wish to avenge himself, but wished to gloat over the tortures of the men who had snatched the beautiful girl from him, who had diminished his renown as a soldier, and had covered him with ridicule by tying him, as if he were a child. A sad outlook was before Zagloba but, for the moment, he was comforted in the thought that he still lived; that he would be led to Kshvonos for examination, so that he would have a few, or perhaps several days, before him; and, meantime he lay lonely here in the pig-sty, and had plenty of time in the stillness of the night to think about devices. That was the one and only redeeming point in the case. But when he thought of the other side, the creeping sensation came over him like a thousand ants creeping over his body.

"Devices . . . . ! If a hog or a sow lay in this pen, it would have better prospects than I have," murmured Pan Zagloba, "for it would not be tied, would not be fastened with its own sword. If Solomon had only been tied like this, he would not have been any wiser than his trousers or stockings. Oh God, Oh God, why dost thou punish me! Of all men in the world, this thief was the sole one I wished most to avoid; and now, it is my fate to run right into his hands. My skin will be combed like Svieboda cloth. If anyone else had caught me, I should declare that I had joined the rebellion, and then run away. Possibly, another might not believe me and, how much less this man? The devil led him here—Oh God! Oh God! I can move neither hand nor foot. O God! God!"

Presently, however, Zagloba reflected that if his hands and feet were free, he might more easily find a way of escape Suppose he should try to free himself. If he only could succeed in getting his sword away from under his knees, he could manage the rest; but how could he draw it out. He turned on one side,—no use. He reflected again.

Then he began to roll about on his back, faster and faster, and, each movement brought him half an inch forward. He became very warm and his brow perspired more than at the dance. Occasionally, he interrupted his labor; because it

seemed to him that one of the soldiers was approaching the door; but, on being reassured he began with new zest until he had rolled himself over to the wall.

Now he began to wriggle in a different manner. Not from his head to feet, but from side to side; so that, at each turn, the end of the sword gently struck the wall. It glided each time a little more from beneath his knees and the handle came a little more to one side.

His heart beat like a hammer for he saw that his efforts would be rewarded. He kept on wriggling, endeavoring to strike the wall as gently as possible; and, only when the Cossacks were making such a noise outside that they would not hear him. At length, came the moment when the point of the sword was on a line with one knee and elbow so that he could not push it against the wall any longer.

At the opposite end it extended considerably and this was the heaviest portion taking the handle into consideration.

On the hilt of the sword was a cross as is usual in these weapons and Zagloba counted on this cross.

For the third time he began to squirm but the object of his endeavors, now, was to turn his feet towards the wall. When he had succeeded in doing this, he began to push himself lengthwise. His sword was still between his kneecaps and hands but the hilt at each jerk caught against the uneven ground. The hilt had now stuck fast and Zagloba twisted more violently again, for the last time; and, for a moment, he was unable to move for joy.

He had disengaged the sword completely.

Now the nobleman drew his hands from his knees and although they were still tied together he was able to seize the sword. He held the sheath fast between his feet and drew the sword. It was the work of an instant to cut the thongs that held his feet.

It was difficult to free his hands. He was obliged to put the sword on the dung heap, lying with its edge upturned, and to work away at his bonds until he cut them through.

When he finished that, he was not only unbound but also armed. He took a deep breath and, crossing himself, thanked God.

But, from cutting his fetters to escaping from Bohun's hands, was a long stretch.

"What's to be done next," said Zagloba to himself.

But he found no answer. The pig-sty was surrounded with

Cossacks—there must have been at least a hundred men—and a mouse could not have crept by them unperceived, much less a big man like Zagloba.

"I see that I must take to my heels. My wit is worth as much as shoeblacking, although one can get very good blacking at the market in Hungary. If God does not give me any good ideas, I shall be a roast for the crows; but, if an idea comes to me, I will make a vow to observe chastity, like Pan Longin." The loud conversation of the soldiers interrupted his thoughts. He jumped up and put his ear to a crack between the beams. The dried, pine boards gave back the sound as the sounding board does the tones of a lute. He heard quite clearly.

"And whither are we going from here?" asked a voice.

"I do not now, probably to Kamenets," answered another.

"Bah, the horses cannot do it." They can hardly drag one foot after the other."

"That is why we are waiting here. They can rest till to-morrow."

A pause followed, then the first voice said more quietly.

"And it seems to me, father, that the ataman will go to Yampol from Kamenets."

Zagloba held his breath.

"Silence! if it suits your young head," was the answer.

Another silence followed but, from the opposite wall, came whispering tones.

"They are everywhere; they are watching everywhere," grunted Zagloba.

And he went to the opposite wall. Now, he heard the horses crunching their oats and snorting, as they stood outside the wall. He judged that the soldiers were lying down and conversing, for the second seemed to come from beneath him.

"Hey," said one, "we have ridden here without sleeping, without eating, without giving the horses a rest, and all, only that we may be impaled in Yeremy's camp."

"Is it certain that he is here?"

"The people who fled from Yarmolints saw him just as plainly as I see you. What they relate is dreadful. He is as tall as a fir-tree, has two torches in his head, and his horse is a dragon."

"Oh Lord, have mercy on us!"

"We ought to take this Pole and his soldiers and make our escape."

"How would you fly. The horses are dying already?"

"It looks bad, brother. If I were the ataman I would stick this Pole through the throat and would go, even if it were on foot, to Kamenets."

"We are going to take him with us to Kamenets. The ataman wants to have some fun with him."

"The devil will have some fun with you, first," growled Zagloba.

It is strange! In spite of his great dread of Bohun and, perhaps, for that very reason, he swore that he would not give himself up alive. He was now free from his bonds and, with his sword in his hand, he would defend himself. If they killed him, well, that could not be helped; but, alive, they should never catch him. The snorting and groaning of the horses, who were more than ordinarily exhausted, drowned the rest of the conversation but brought a better idea to Zagloba.

"If I could only get through this wall, and unexpectedly jump on a horses' back," he said. "It is night and, before they knew what had happened, I should be out of sight. It is hard to carry on a pursuit in these hollows and valleys by daylight, how much more in the darkness of night! God help me to do it!"

But the means were not easy. He would be obliged to break through the wall and to do that one would need be a Podbipyenta; or to burrow like a fox, and even then he would be seen and heard; and, before his foot was in the stirrup, he would be caught.

A thousand such thoughts passed through his mind; but, just because there were so many, no single one gave him any clear solution of the difficulty.

"There is nothing for it, but to lose my head," he thought and went to the third wall.

Suddenly, his head struck something hard. He felt it and found it was a ladder. This was not a pig's sty, then, but an ox-stable, and half of it was a space which served to store hay and straw. Without reflecting Zagloba climbed the ladder. Arrived at the top he puffed for breath a while and then slowly drew the ladder up after him.

"Now I am in a fortress!" he grunted. "If they cannot find a second ladder, they will not get up here so easily. If I do not cleave the first head in two that shows itself, I will let myself be made into smoked meat. "Oh, the devil," he said

suddenly, "that is a fact, they might not only smoke me but roast me, and melt me into tallow, but let be, let be! If they wish to burn the pig sty—it is well. They will then not be able to catch me alive; and it is all the same, whether the ravens eat me raw or cooked. If I can only escape from the hands of these assassins, the rest does not trouble me, and I hope that something may yet occur."

As we see, Zagloba turned easily from despair to hope. Unexpectedly, he had become filled with as much confidence as though he were already in Prince Yeremy's camp, and yet, his position had changed very slightly. He was sitting in the loft with his sword in his hands, and could in fact defend himself for a long time; but that was all. From the loft to freedom, the road was still worse now, for below him the swords and pikes of the Cossacks who were guarding him, awaited him outside.

"How will it end?" mumbled Zagloba and, as he neared the roof, he began to tear away the thatch carefully, in order to open for himself an outlook upon the world.

This was easy for him, as the soldiers, to lighten the tediousness of their watch, were carrying on a lively conversation. Besides this, a strong wind had risen and, the noise of the leaves in the neighboring trees drowned the rustle made by the removal of the thatch.

Before long, he had made a hole in the thatch. He stuck his head through and looked round him.

It was near dawn and, in the East, could already be seen the first gleams of morning light. Zagloba saw, by the pale light, that the courtyard before the house was completely filled with horses. Immediately before the house, lay long rows of sleeping Cossacks. Beyond was the crane of the well, and the trough, in which the water gleamed, and close by another row of sleeping men and several soldiers with unsheathed swords in their hands, keeping guard over them.

"Those are my men whom they have tied," said Zagloba. "Bah," he added, in a moment, "if they only were mine, but they are the prince's. I was a good leader, truly. I led them into the jaws of the dog. If God gives me my freedom, I shall be ashamed to show my eyes. And what was the cause of all this! Love and drink. What did the marriage of that mob matter to me? I had as much business with that wedding as with a dog's wedding. I renounce that traitor, mead, which paralyzes my feet, instead of mounting to my head. All the

evil in the world comes from drink; for, if they had attacked us when we were sober, as true as I live, I should have conquered them and shoved Bohun in the pig-sty." Here, Zagloba's eyes fell upon the cabin in which the chieftain was sleeping, and remained fixed on the door.

"Sleep, rascal," he growled, "sleep! May you dream that the devil is flaying you, for you will not escape him in the end. You wanted to make a sieve of my skin, but we will see if I cannot prepare your skin in such a manner that it will not be even good for dog's boots. Only just dare to come up here to me. If I could only get away from here, if I only could! But how?" Indeed, this wish seemed incapable of fulfillment. The whole courtyard was so packed with men and horses that, even if Zagloba had succeeded in getting out of the stables, if he really could have slid down from the roof and sprung on the back of one of the horses that were standing before the stable, he could not, in any case, have forced his way through, to the gate, and how could he get beyond the gate?

And yet it seemed to him as though he already completed half of the task. He was free, armed, and sat in the loft as in a fortress.

"What the devil," he thought, "is getting out of the snare if you are to be hung afterwards."

And again plans began to rush through his head, but they were so many that he was unable to choose one of them.

Meanwhile day was dawning, the surrounding of the cabins stood out from the darkness and the roof seemed to be overlaid with silver. Zagloba could already distinguish the different groups in the yard; could recognize the red color of the uniform of his men, who were lying near the well, and the sheep skins of the Cossack who were lying beside the cabin.

Suddenly a form arose from the ranks of the sleepers and walked slowly across the yard, pausing a moment beside the men and horses and speaking for a while with the Cossacks who were watching the prisoners; then he approached the stable. In the first moment, Zagloba thought it was Bohun; for he had noticed that the sentries had spoken to him as subordinates.

"Ah," he grunted, "if I only had a gun in my hand, I would show you how to cover yourself with your feet."

At this moment, the figure raised its head and the gray light of dawn fell upon its face.

It was not Bohun; it was the sotnik Holody, whom Zagloba recognized at once, for he remembered him very well from that time when he and Bohun were companions in Chigrin.

"Boys," said Holody, "have you not slept yet?"

"No, little father, if we had been sleeping it would be time to change (guards)."

"I will change soon. And the rascal has not escaped?"

"No, little father! Only his soul could have escaped, for he has not budged."

"He's a regular fox. Just see what he is doing, for he is quite equal to sinking through the earth."

"Immediately," answered some of the Cossacks, and approached the door of the stable.

"Throw down some hay from the loft, rub down the horses. We shall set out at sunrise."

"Right, little father."

Pan Zagloba hastily left his position near the hole in the roof, and crept to the entrance to the loft. Presently he heard the grating of the door hinges and the rustling of straw beneath the step of the Cossacks. His heart was beating like with a hammer. His hand grasped more firmly the hilt of his sword, while he renewed his vow in his mind, that he would rather be burned alive with the pigsty or allow himself to be chopped like straw for fodder, than give himself up alive. He expected also, at any moment, that the soldiers would raise a terrible alarm; but he was mistaken. He only heard them running about more quickly in the stable and finally, one said:

"What a devil is there! I cannot feel him. We certainly threw him down here."

"Is he not a magician or what? Strike a light. It is as dark as in the forest."

There was silence for a moment. Vasil was probably looking for flint and tinder. The others began to call him softly.

"Answer, Pan Nobleman."

"Kiss the dog's ear," murmured Zagloba.

Then he heard them strike the flint and a shower of sparks lighted up the dark interior of the stable and the heads of the soldiers that were covered with caps. And, then it became darker than ever.

"He is not here, he is not here," cried several voices.

Then one of them sprang to the door. "Father Holody! Father Holody!"

"What's the matter?" cried the sotnik stepping into the door.

"The Pole has gone."

"How! is he gone?"

"He must have sunk into the ground. He is nowhere to be seen. Oh, God pity on us! We struck fire. He is gone."

"That is impossible! Oh, the ataman will pay you off for that. Has he escaped, or what? Did you go to sleep?"

"No, little father, we did not sleep. He did not come out of the pig-sty on our side."

"Quiet, do not wake the ataman. If he did not get out, he must be somewhere about. Did you look everywhere?"

"Everywhere."

"Also in the loft?"

"How could he get into the hayloft, if he was tied."

"Fool! If he had not untied his fastenings he would be here. Look in the hay loft! Strike fire!"

Once more the sparks flew. The news was quickly spread among all the sentries. They all hastened, with the speed that is usual in sudden emergencies, and went into the stable. Quick steps were heard; hasty questions and still more hasty answers crossed each other like swords in battle.

"To the loft! To the loft!"

"And keep watch outside!"

"Do not wake the ataman or it will be the worse for you!"

"There is no ladder here!"

"Bring another!"

"There is none anywhere."

"Rush into the cabin and see if there is not one there!"

"Oh, the cursed Pole!"

"Climb up on the roof, and come through the roof into the loft."

"We cannot do that, for it is overhanging and has boards nailed across the underside."

"Bring pikes, we will climb up on those. This dog has taken the ladder up with him."

"Bring pikes," commanded Holody.

The Cossacks hurried away for pikes. Others looked up towards the loft. The morning light poured through the open door into the stable and, by its gray gleam, one saw the black square opening that led to the hayloft. From below, cried some voices:

"Come, Pan Nobleman, let the ladder down, and come

down yourself. You will not get away like this, so why do you give people trouble. Come down! Come down!"

There was a silence.

"You are a wise man! If that could help you stay there; but this will not help you, so better come down willingly, good man."

Silence. . . .

"Come down. If not, we will scalp you, and throw you down on the dung heap."

Pan Zagloba remained quiet, deaf to the threats as to the flatteries. He sat in the dark, like a badger in its hole, prepared for the most obstinate resistance. He only grasped his sword more tightly, panted a little and prayed in silence.

Meanwhile, they brought pikes. Three of these were tied together and placed with their points upwards beneath the opening to the loft. Zagloba was thinking whether he could not snatch them away and pull them up, but he reflected that they were too far beneath him, and he might not be able to pull them up entirely. Besides, they would have brought others immediately.

The whole stable was now full of Cossacks. Some lighted pieces of pitch pine; others dragged various poles and racks with them, which of course proved too short, so they tied them together with straps; for it was really very hard to climb up on the pikes, but there were some who wanted to climb.

"I will go," cried several voices.

"Wait for the ladder," said Holody.

"What harm would it do to try climbing the pikes?"

"Vasil can get up. He climbs like a cat."

"Well try it."

Others began to joke.

"Carefully there; he has a sword and will cut off your head. You will see."

"He will seize you by the head and drag you up and then he will finish you as if you were a bear."

Vasil could not be frightened.

"He knows," said he, "that if he were to touch me only with his finger, the ataman would give him to the devil to swallow, and you, too, brothers."

That was meant for a warning for Zagloba, who sat still and did not budge.

But the Cossacks were soon in a good humor, as is the case among soldiers; for the whole proceeding appeared to them as good humor, so they continued joking.

"There will be one fool the less in this white world,' they said. "He will not care if we pay him for your neck. He is a bold fellow."

"Aha! He's a magician. The devil knows what he has changed himself into, the wizard. You, Vasil, you do not know what you may find under the roof."

Vasil, who had just spat on his hands and was about to climb the pikes, suddenly took his hands off them.

"I will look for the Pole," he said, "but not for the devil."

Meanwhile, they had fastened the racks together, and stood them up.

It was difficult, however, to mount them, for they gave where they were tied together, and the thin steps cracked beneath their feet when they attempted to step on them. Holody himself stepped on them and said, as he climbed:

"You see, Pan Nobleman, we are not joking. You have taken it into your head to sit in the loft and you may sit there; but do not defend yourself. We will take you anyway, if the whole stable has to be torn down. Listen to reason."

Presently his head reached the opening and disappeared slowly. Then, one heard a swish and a terrible scream and the Cossack staggered and fell among the crowd, with his head cloven in two.

"Cut! Cut!" screamed the Cossacks.

A frightful confusion ensued. Screams and cries were raised, which were drowned by Zagloba's voice of thunder.

"Ha! You thieves, you cannibles, you vipers! I will kill every last one of you, you mangy rascals. You shall feel a knight's hand. To think of attacking honorable men by night! To fasten a nobleman in a pig's sty—ha, you mob! Come and fight with me, single handed, or two at a time, for all I care! But come on! You will leave your heads behind in the dung heap, for I will cut them off, as sure as I live!"

"Cut! Cut!" screamed a soldier.

"We will burn down the stable."

"I will burn it down myself, you fools. . . . But, with you in it."

"Several go up at once," cried an old Cossack. "Hold the steps. Support them with pikes. Put bundles of straw round your heads, and go ahead. We must have him." As he said this, he mounted the steps and, with him, two companions. The steps began to break; the ladder was more and more

shaky; but more than twenty strong arms grasped them below, and, higher up, they were supported by pikes. Others poked their pikes through the hole in the loft, in order to keep off the sword thrusts.

A few minutes later, three fresh heads fell down on the heads of those standing below. Zagloba excited by his success was bellowing like a buffalo, and such frightful oaths came from his mouth that the world never heard before; and they would have terrified the hearts of the Cossacks, if these had not been filled with wild madness and rage. Several stuck their pikes at hazard through the opening to the loft; others forced their way up the steps, although certain death awaited them. Suddenly, a cry was heard at the door, and Bohun himself sprang into the stable. He was bareheaded, in his stockings and shirtsleeves. He held his drawn sword in his hand, and his eyes darted flames of fire.

"Through the roof, dogs!" he cried. "Tear away the thatch and take him alive!" When Zagloba saw him, he bellowed:

"You peasant, only come here! I will cut off your nose and your ears, but not your neck, for that is the hangman's property. What? Are you afraid? Coward! Are you terrified, you mean servant? Bind this rascal and I will have mercy on the rest of you. Come here, you gallows bird, come here, you Jew-pudding. Stick your head through, come, come, I shall be glad. I will receive you in such a manner that your father, the devil, and your mother, the wench, will stand before your eyes."

During this time, the beams of the roof were beginning to crack. The Cossacks were probably above there, and beginning to take off the thatch. Zagloba heard it, but fear no longer robbed him of his strength. He was as if drunk from fighting and blood.

"I will jump into a corner and end my life there," he thought.

But at this moment, firing was heard outside, all over the courtyard and, at the same time, several Cossacks broke into the stable.

"Little father, little father!" they cried, "come quickly."

Zagloba could not understand at first what had happened and stood bewildered. He looked down through the opening, but no one was there. The rafters had ceased to creak.

"What does it mean? What has happened?" he cried aloud. "Ah, I know, they want to set the stable on fire and are firing their pistols at the thatch."

The noise outside grew louder and was increased by tramping of horses, shouts, firing, mingled with yells and clashing of iron.

"God, that sounds like a fight," thought Zagloba. He ran to his peep-hole in the roof. He looked out—and his legs bent under him for joy.

A fight was raging in the courtyard, and Zagloba could see that Bohun's men had been frightfully routed. Suddenly attacked, and frightened by pistols that had been placed at their heads and breasts, they crowded against the fences, in the cabin and in the sheds, hewn down with swords, crushed and trampled by those who had come swarming in on horseback and had overcome them, almost without resistance. The ranks of soldiers in red uniforms crowded and fired on the fugitives, so that it was impossible for them to form in any order, to draw their swords, or to mount their horses and ride away. Only a few groups defended themselves. Others who tried, amid the noise and confusion, to saddle their horses, were cut down before their feet reached the stirrup. Others, again, threw away their pikes and swords and fled behind the fence; some got caught between the posts; others ran away uttering unearthly cries and howls. The unfortunates believed that Prince Yeremy himself had attacked them, unexpectedly, like an eagle, and was destroying them with his whole army. They had no time to come to their senses or to look round them. The war-cry of the assailants, the swishing of the swords and the reports of the shots drove them along like a wind-storm. The hot breath of the horses fell on their necks. "Men, fly," was heard on all sides. "Fight, kill!" answered the attackers.

And, finally, from his hiding-place, Zagloba saw little Pan Volodiyovski, who was standing near the gate, at the head of several soldiers, giving verbal instructions and with his baton and, occasionally dashing with his bay horse into the crowd. And every time he turned, a man fell, without a sound coming from his lips. Oh, little Pan Volodiyovski was a master of masters and a soldier, blood and bone. He never lost sight of the battle, advised here and there, then turned again and looked round him, then again took part himself; just like a leader of a orchestra who, in the midst of directing, sometimes himself joins in; sometimes stops and listens attentively to see that each one is playing his part.

When Zagloba saw that, he stamped his feet on the floor

of the loft so that clouds of dust arose, and clapped his hands and bellowed:

"Kill the dogs! Strike! Slay! Flay them! Hew them! Slash! Cut! Stab! Thrust!"

He cried thus, running hither and thither, his eyes blood-shot with straining them, so that for a moment he could see nothing. But, when his sight returned, there was a more beautiful spectacle, for behold—surrounded by several dozen of his soldiers, was Bohun, flying without his cap on, just as Zagloba saw him last, in his shirt; and, behind him, at the head of his soldiers, little Pan Volodiyovski.

"Kill!" cried Zagloba. "That is Bohun!"

But his voice did not reach the soldiers. Meanwhile Bohun had crossed the fence with Pan Volodiyovski after him. Some of them remained; the horses of others fell while jumping. Zagloba saw Bohun on the plain as well as Volodiyovski. Presently, they were all running; some to escape, others pursuing; each one after his man. Zagloba held his breath. His eyes almost started from their sockets—for what did he see? Volodiyovski overtakes Bohun; he springs towards him, like a boarhound on the boar. The chieftain turns his head, raises his sword.

"They are fighting!" cries Zagloba.

In another moment, Bohun's horse falls with him and Pan Volodiyovski tramples him down and pursues the others.

But Bohun lives. He rises from the ground and runs over to the rocks that are overgrown with bushes.

"Stop him! Stop him!" cries Zagloba. "That is Bohun!"

Now, a fresh band of Cossacks comes on the scene who had formerly been creeping round the other side of the rocks, but, being discovered, are seeking a new outlet of escape.

In the background, at a distance of a few rods, soldiers are approaching. They overtake Bohun, surround him and lead him away with them. Finally they disappear behind the bend of the narrow path, the other soldiers following them.

In the farmyard all was still and deserted, for Zagloba's soldiers, who had been freed by Volodiyovski, had mounted their horses and joined the other soldiers in pursuit of the enemy.

Zagloba now let down the ladder, climbed down from the loft and said, as he stepped from the sty into the yard:

"I am free."

He looked about him; the farmyard was covered with the

"I WILL KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU."
With Fire and Sword.

dead bodies of the Zaporojians and a few other soldiers. The nobleman walked slowly among them, observed each one carefully and, finally, knelt down beside one of them. Presently he rose again with a tin flask in his hand.

"It is full," he murmured.

And, placing it to his lips, he bent his head back.

"Not bad!"

Again, he looked round him and repeated, but in a much louder voice:

"I am free!"

Then he went into the cabin and, on the threshold, stumbled against the body of the old cooper whom Bohun's men had killed, and disappeared inside. When he came out again, he wore over his dirty coat, that was all covered with manure, Bohun's gorgeous, gold-embroidered girdle, in which was a dagger with a large ruby in its hilt.

"God has rewarded bravery," he murmured, "for the pocket of the belt is full also. Ha! this horrid murderer. I hope he will not escape. But this little pigmy. I will put a bullet in him. He is a spiteful little fellow, just like a wasp. I knew that he was a brave soldier but I did not expect him to ride upon Bohun like a grey mare. It is strange that such a soul and so much couraage should hide in such a litle body. Bohun could easily carry him on a string at his belt, as if he were a little kid. May the bullets strike him or, better still, God give him luck. He certainly could not have known Bohun or else he would have killed him. Ugh! Ugh! how it smells of powder here! It fairly chokes one! Well, I have managed to wriggle out of such dangers as I never before experienced. God be praised! Well, well, but to think they have not killed Bohun! I must look closer at this Volodiyovski, for the devil must be in him."

Thus talking to himslef, Zagloba sat in the threshold of the stable and waited.

Presently, in the distance, appeared the soldiers returning from the pursuit, with Volodiyovski at their head. When he saw Zagloba, he quickened his horse's pace and, dismounting, came to meet him.

"What, I see you still alive!" he asked, from a distance.

"Myself, and no one else," said Zagloba. "God reward you for coming to help me."

"Let us praise God that it happened at the right time," answered the little knight, shaking Zagloba's hand heartily.

"But how did you knew of the danger in which I was placed?"

"The peasants from the farm sent me word."

"Oh, and I thought they had betrayed me!"

"What made you think that? They are good people. The boy and his wife hardly escaped with their lives; as for the rest of the wedding-party, I do not know what became of them."

"If they were not traitors they have been killed by the Cossacks. The proprietor of the farm is lying over there beside the cabin. But never mind that, tell me, Pan, is Bohun alive? Did he escape?"

"Was that Bohun?"

"The one without a cap, in his shirt; whom you knocked over, together with his horse."

"I cut his hand through. It is too bad I did not recognize him. But you, but you, Pan Zagloba, what have you done?"

"What have I done," repeated Zagloba, "Come, Pan Michael and see!"

Then Zagloba took Volodiyovski by the hand and led him into the stable.

"Look,' he repeated.

Pan Volodiyovski, at first, saw nothing, for he came from outside into the darkness; but, as his eyes became accustomed to it, he noticed the dead bodies lying on the dung-heap.

"Who killed these men?" he asked in astonishment.

"I," said Zagloba, "you asked what I did, look there."

"Hm," said the young officer, shaking his head. "And how did you do it?"

"Up there," Zagloba said, pointing to the loft, "I defended myself while they attacked me from below and through the roof. I do not know how long it lasted, for in the heat of battle, one does not reckon time. It was Bohun, Bohun with his cruel strength and his picked men. He will remember you, but he will also remember me. Another time, I will tell you how I happened to become a prisoner, all that I suffered, and how I settled Bohun, for I had a war of words with him. To-day, I am so exhausted that I can hardly stand on my feet."

"Well!" repeated Pan Volodiyovski, "I cannot deny that you defended yourself bravely, but one thing I must tell you. That you are better as a fighter than as a leader."

"Pan Michael," said the nobleman, "now is not the time

to argue. Let us, rather, thank God that he has given us both such a great victory, the remembrance of which will long remain in the memory of men."

Voldiyovski continued to observe Zagloba. Until this moment, he had imagined that he had gained the victory that Zagloba now sought to share with him.

But he merely made his own mental comment and, shaking his head, said:

"Well, so let it be."

An hour later, the two friends, at the head of their united divisions were marching to Yarmolints.

Hardly one of Zagloba's soldiers was missing, for they had been sound asleep and offered no resistance; and Bohun, who was commissioned principally to look for people who would give him information, had them all taken prinsoners, instead of killing them.

CHAPTER VIII.

Bohun, although a valiant and careful leader, had no luck with this expedition that he had undertaken against Prince Yeremy's divisions. He was firmly convinced that the prince was marching with his whole army against Kshyvonos, for the prisoners he had taken from Zagloba told him that the prince was following them, and they believed it themselves; so there remained nothing for the unfortunate ataman to do but to retreat as quickly as he could to Kshyvonos and the undertaking was not easy. Scarcely did he succeed in three days in collecting a troop of a little over two hundred men. The rest had either fallen in fight, or remained upon the field of battle, or were wandering among the ravines or in the rushes; not knowing what to do, or whither they should turn their steps. And this troop was not of much use to Bohun for, beaten, terrified, and demoralized, they were ready to fly at the least alarm, and, yet, they were the best picked soldiers; it would be difficult to find better ones in the whole of Sich. But the Cossacks did not know how small the force was which Volodiyovski had against them, or, that thanks to his agility and his surprising them, that he was able to attack and defeat the sleeping and unprepared men.

They thought that they were dealing, if not with the prince himself, yet with a strong and considerable division of the army. Bohun was burning like fire; his hand was cut; he had been trampled by his horse, ill and beaten. His accursed enemy had slipped out of his hands; his glory was tarnished. And the very warriors, who on the eve of the defeat, would have blindly followed him not only to the Crimea but even to hell against the very dreaded Yeremy. They had lost faith; they had lost spirit; and were only thinking how they could save their throats and escape total defeat. And, yet Bohun had done all that a leader could do. He had omitted nothing, had stationed sentries around the farmyard, and was only taking a rest because the horse, that had traveled hither from Kamenets, had hardly stopped for

breath and were utterably incapable of traveling any farther.

But Volodiyovski, who during his young life, had experience in sorties and hunts upon the Tartars went, like a wolf in the night, on the watch; taken them prisoners before they could scream or even fire; and attacked the rest so quickly that even he, Bohun was obliged to fly, just as he was, in his trousers and his shirt sleeves. As the chieftain thought of these things, a mist came before his eyes, his head grew dizzy and despair gnawed at his heart, and he was enraged like a mad dog. He, who had snatched the Turkish galleys in the Black Sea; he, who had penetrated to Perekop and role across the necks of the Tartars and had held burning torches beneath the eyes of the Khan; he, who had hewn down at the side of the prince a regiment in Vasiloots close to Lubni, had been obliged to fly in his shirt sleeves without his cap or sword—for he had lost the latter in his fight with the little knight. And, when they stopped to feed the horses and no one saw him the chieftain seized his head with both hands and cried: "Where is my Cossack fame? Where my beloved sword?" and, as he thus cried, a wild madness seemed to seize him, and he took to drinking like an inhuman being. He wanted to march against the prince, attack his whole army; die, and perish and be lost forever.

He wished to do this—but the Cossacks did not. "If you should kill us, little father, we would not go," they answered gloomily, to his outbreak of fury—and it was useless, in such outbreaks of fury, to slash them with the sword or blacken their faces with gunpowder from his pistol—they would not go and they did not.

It seemed as if the ground were giving way beneath the feet of the ataman, for his misfortunes were not yet at an end. Fearing that he would be pursued and believing that Kshyvonos had already given up the siege, he did not go immediately towards the south, but turned in the direction of the east and met Longin's division. Watchful as a crane, Longin did not let himself be surprised by stealth, but attacked the ataman first and routed his forces; the more easily, as the soldiers themselves were not anxious to fight, and drove them towards Skshetuski; who defeated them so thoroughly that Bohun, after wandering for some time in the steppes, finally arrived at Kshyvonos camp without glory, without officers or soldiers, without prisoners and with only a few horses.

But the savage Kshyvonos, who was usually so cruel to those under him whom fortune had not favored, was not angry this time. He knew, from his own experience, what it meant to fight with Yeremy's army. He was kind to Bohun, comforted him and calmed him and, when the Cossack leader became a prey to a violent fever, he had him watched, tended, healed and kept as the pupil in his eye.

Meanwhile, the four officers of the prince, after filling the country with terror and horror, returned joyfully to Yarmolints where they remained several days in order to rest the men and horses. After they had taken up their quarters together houses, each of them gave an account of all that had happened to Pan Skshetuski and all that he had endured; and then they took to drinking wine, in order to ease their hearts by cheerful conversation and to satisfy their common curiosity.

But Zagloba would hardly give any of them a chance to speak. He did not wish to listen but expected everyone to listen to him, and it proved that he had the most to relate.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I was taken prisoner, that is true, but the wheel of fortune turned. Bohun has been fighting all his life, and to-day we have conquered him. That is the luck of war. To-day you tan them; to-morrow they tan you. But God punished Bohun for having attacked us when we were sleeping the sleep of the just, and waking us in such a shameless manner. Ha, ha! he thought he would frighten me with his dirty tongue; but I tell you, sirs, as soon as I answered him back, he at once lost courage, became confused, and blabbed out just what he did not intend. I could tell you volumes! If I had not been taken prisoner, Pan Michael and I would not have beaten him. I say, he and I, for on this occasion—I have done most of it. I shall never cease to affirm this till the day of my death. So may God grant me health. Listen further to my story; that if Pan Michael and I had not beaten him, neither Podbiyenta nor Skshetuski would have overtaken him; and if we had not defeated him he would have defeated us—and what would not have happened. Who prevented it?"

"Ah, you're like a little fox," said Longin, "here you wag your tail, there you slip away, and, in every case, you manage to get out of the trap."

"Only a foolish boarhound runs close behind the game, for he catches nothing and does not get even good scent and

finally loses the trail altogether. How many men have you lost?"

"About twelve altogether, and a couple wounded. They did not attack us fiercely."

"And you, Pan Michael?"

"About thirty, for I attacked them unexpectedly."

"And you, lieutenant?"

"As many as Pan Longin."

"And I lost two; now tell me who was the best leader? Let's see how matters stand? With what object did we come here? We were sent by the prince in order to collect news about Kshyvonos. Well, I will tell you that I was the first to get news about him, and that from the best source, from Bohun himself. I knew that he is encamped at Kamenets but that he is afraid and will raise the siege. I know that from the people; but I know something else, that will make you all very happy, gentlemen, and I did not mention it, as yet, because I wished to consult you all about it. Besides I did not feel well, because my labors were too much for me and my stomach rebelled at those murderous thongs. I thought my blood would have been poured out.'

"Speak, for God's sake," cried Volodiyovski, "Did you hear anything of our poor girl."

"You have guessed it, may God bless her!" said Zagloba.

Pan Skshetuski stood up, to his full height, but immediately sat down again. There was such a complete silence, that one could hear the humming of the mosquitoes at the little window. Then Zagloba continued:

"She lives, I know it for certain, and is in Bohun's hands. Gentlemen, they are dreadful hands, but God has not allowed any wrong or evil to come near her. Bohun, himself, confessed that to me; that he might deal wrongly with anyone else, but not with her."

"How can that be? How can that be?" asked Skshetuski feverishly.

"If I lie, may I be struck by lightning," answered Zagloba earnestly. "The matter is too sacred with me. Listen to what Bohun told me when he was mocking me, before I roused him fully. 'What did you imagine,' (he said) 'that you were bringing her to Bar for a peasant? Am I a peasant that I should wish to take advantage of her? I would rather take her to Kiev and be married to her in the church and have the people sing songs for us and let three hundred

candles be lighted, to me, the ataman and hetman!' He stamped his foot and threatened me with his knife for he thought he would frighten me; but I said to him he could not frighten a dog."

Skshetuski had recovered himself. His monk's face had brightened and fear, hope, joy and uncertainty were once more depicted in his countenance.

"Where is she then? Where?" he asked hastily. "If you found out that, you are a messenger from heaven."

"He did not tell me that, but a wise man needs only a couple of words. Consider, gentleman, that he was insulting me without ceasing until I roused him to a pitch of fury; but he said this: 'First I will lead you to Kshyvonos, and then I would like to invite you to the wedding; but now we have war and so it cannot take place so soon.' Consider that gentlemen, not 'so soon'—so we still have time. Also mark his words, 'I will lead you to Kshyvonos then I would like to invite you to the wedding,' so, in any case, she cannot be with Kshyvonos but in some other place, where the war cannot penetrate."

"You're a man as good as gold," cried Volodiyovski.

"I at first thought," said Zagloba, delighted, "that he had perhaps taken her to Kiev—but, no, for he said that he would take her to Kiev to get married so if he is going to take her there, that proves that she is not yet there. He is too clever to take her there, for if Bogdan Khmyelnitski goes to Cher-Vona Russ, (Red Russia), Kiev would easily fall into the hands of the Lithuanian army."

"That is true; that is true;" cried Longin, "that is true, as God lives! Many would like to have your intelligence."

"But I would not like to exchange with theirs, for fear I might get beet soup instead of understanding; which might easily happen to me, among the Lithuanians."

"He is beginning to ridicule me again," said Longin.

"Allow me to finish. Well, she is not with Kshyvonos, not in Kiev; where then can she be?"

"Here is the difficulty!"

"If you can guess, tell me quickly, for I am burning to know," cried Skshetuski.

"Beyond Yampol!" said Zagloba, looking triumphantly round with his sound eye.

"How do you know that?" said Volodiyovski.

"How do I know it? Look here! I was sitting in the pig-

sty, for that rascal had shut me up in the pigsty,—may a hog eat him, and the Cossacks were conversing all around, outside, so I put my ear close to the wall, and what did I hear? One said 'the ataman will now ride to Yampol,' the other answered, 'Keep still, if you value your young head.' I would wager my neck that she is in Yampol."

"Oh, as true as God is in Heaven," said Volodiyovski.

"He cannot have taken her into the Wild Lands, so he must have taken and hidden her somewhere between Yampol and Yahorlik. I was in that region once when the King's judges met those of the Khan to settle questions, arising from the seizure of cattle on the frontier. As you gentlemen, know, it was in Yahorlik that the frequent border questions about driven-off cattle were settled. There are enough ravines and hiding-places there, all along the Dnieper, and a number of woods, in which people have farms and live in a state of lawlessness, dwell in deserted places; and do not even see any neighbors. He may have hidden her with some of those wild hermits because, she would be perfectly safe there."

"Pshaw, but how can one get there, as Kshyvonos has possession of the road," said Longin. "I hear that Yampol is also a nest of banditti."

"And if I should wage ten heads," said Skshetuski, "I will save her. I will disguise myself and look for her and God will help me—I will find her."

"I will go with you Yan," said Volodiyovski.

"And I will go as a beggar with my teorbane. Believe me, sirs, I have more experience than any of you and as I am really sick of the teorbane, I will take the bagpipes."

"Then, can I be of any assistance to you, little brother?" said Longin.

"Certainly!" answered Zagloba, "If it is necessary to cross the Dnieper, you can carry us over like St. Christopher."

"I thank you with all my heart, gentlemen," said Skshetuski, "and I accept your offer with a joyful heart. There is nothing like true friends in adversity, and Providence has not denied me these, as I see. The Great God grant me that I may be enabled to recompense you with my health and means."

"We shall all be like one man," cried Zagloba, "God approves of concord, and you will see that our labor will not be in vain."

"Well, there's nothing left to me," said Skshetuski, after a silence, "but to lead the men back to the prince and to start out with you at once. We will go along the Dniester until we pass Yampol and get to Yahorlik, and search everywhere, and, if, as I hope, Khymelnitski is already beaten, or will be before we reach the prince, we shall not be delayed by public duty. The regiments will surely go to the Ukraine, to subdue the rebellion there, but they will get on without us."

"Wait a minute, gentlemen," said Volodiyovski, "after Khmyelnitski, Kshyvonos will probably come to the front. Perhaps we may all march with the cavalry to Yampol."

"No, we must get there first," answered Zagloba, "First we will take the men back, in order to be unencumbered. I hope that the prince will be contented with us."

"Especially with you."

"It is so, I shall bring the best news. Believe me, I expect a reward."

"Well, shall we set out?"

"We must wait till to-morrow," said Volodiyovski, "However, Skshetuski must give orders, for he is our leader, but, if we start to-day, I warn you that my horses may not carry us."

"I know that it is impracticable," said Skshetuski, "but I think that, after the horses have been well fed, we can venture it to-morrow."

The following morning, they set out. According to the prince's orders, they were to return to Zbaraj and there await further orders. They rode, therefore, by way of Kujmin, passing to one side of Felshtin to Volochisk where the old highway led past Khlebanovka to Zbaraj. The journey was unpleasant, for it was raining; but they travelled without disturbance, and Pan Longin, alone, who had ridden ahead with a hundred horse, defeated a few bold bands who had collected in the rear of the army of the commander-in-chief. It was not till they reached Volochisk that they halted for a night's rest. But, hardly had they fallen asleep after their long journey, when the alarm of the watch announced that a division of horse was approaching. Soon after, came the news that it was Vyershul with his Tartar squadrons, consequently their own people.

Zagloba, Longin and Little Volodiyovski gathered at once in Skshetuski's room; and, following immediately behind

them, an officer of the light cavalry dashed into the room like a whirlwind, out of breath and completely covered with mud. When Skshetuski saw him he cried:

"Vyershul!"

"It is I . . . " said the new comer, gasping for breath.

"From the prince?"

"Yes. . . . Oh, give me some air for breath!"

"What kind of news? Is Khmyelnitski defeated already?"

"All. . . over. . . with the Commonwealth!"

"By Christ's wounds, what are you saying there? Defeat?"

"A defeat, disgrace and ignominy! Without a battle. . . a panic! Woe! Woe!"

"I cannot believe my own ears. Speak, speak! By the Living God. . . . and the Commander?"

"They have fled."

"Where is our prince."

"He is retreating . . . without an army . . . I have come from him . . . the command is . . . to go at once to Lemberg . . . they are following us."

"Who? Vyershul, Vyershul! Think what you're saying man, who?"

"Khymelnitski—the Tartars!"

"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost!" cried Zagloba, "The world is out of joint."

But Skshetuski understood what was at stake.

"We will ask questions later,' 'he said, "now let us mount."

"To horse! To horse!"

The hoofs of Vyershul's Tartars horses were heard clattering outside the windows. The inhabitants of the place, awakened by the entrance of the soldiery, came with lanterns and torches out of the houses. The news spread like lightning over the town. Alarm bells were presently sounded The little town only a moment before was so peaceful, was now filled with screams, tramping of horses, cries of command and the wails of the Jews. The inhabitants wanted to leave the town in the company of the soldiery. Wagons were got ready, and children, women, and bedding were placed in them. The burgomaster, at the head of some of the residents, came to entreat Skshetuski not to leave them behind, but to allow them to accompany him, at least as far as Tarnopol. But Skshetuski would not listen to it, as he had direct orders from the prince to hasten to Lemburg.

They set out, therefore, and, not till they started, did

Vyershul, after having recovered himself to some extent, relate to them what had happened.

"No such misfortune," said he, "has ever befallen the Commonwealth since she came into existence; Tsetsara, Zolta Woda, and Korsun are comparatively nothing!"

And Skshetuski, Volodiyovski, and Longin bent towards the horses' necks, now taking hold of their own heads, now lifting up their hands.

"The thing passes human understanding,' 'he said, "where is the prince?"

"Forsaken, intentionally put into the background by all. He has not power, even over his own division."

"Who has the command?"

"No one, and every one. I have served a long time and have already cut my teeth in the war, but such soldiers and such leaders I never saw."

Zagloba, who had no special liking for Vyershul, and did not know him well, shook his head and smacked with his lips.

At last he said:

"My good sir, either you did not see clearly, or perhaps you regard a partial as a total defeat; for what you have told us, entirely passes in imagination."

"I grant it; but I tell you, sir, that I would willingly let my head be chopped off if, by some miraculous chance, I should be shown that I am mistaken."

"Then," continued Zagloba, "how is it that you are the first to come to Volochysk after the defeat? I will not presume that you were the first that took to your heels. Where is the army? Whither is it fleeing? What happened to it? Why, if it ran away, did it not get here before you? I am waiting in vain for an answer!"

Vyershul, at any other time, would not have let these questions pass without remark; but now he could think of nothing but of the calamity. Therefore he only said:

"I came here first, because the others have retreated by way of Ojygovts. And the prince sent me here on purpose, because he judged that you were here, gentlemen, and he wished to warn you about the enemy, that you might not be overtaken; and, secondly, because the five hundred horses that you have are no small comfort at this time, as the other division are almost all killed or separated."

"These are wonderful things," murmured Zagloba.

"It is frightful to think of it, despair seizes one, one's heart

breaks, tears flow," said Volodyovski, wringing his hands; "the country is lost, death has become inglorious—such splendid armies scattered . . . . destroyed! It cannot be otherwise than that the end of the world is here, the last day of judgment approaches."

"Do not interrupt him," said Skshetuski, "let him tell it all."

Vyershul was silent awhile, as though he would gather strength. Nothing was to be heard but the splashing of hoofs in the mud, for it was raining. It was late at night and very dark as the heaven was covered with thick clouds. And, in the midst of this darkness, this cloud, Vyershul's words sounded weird and gruesome, as he continued:

"If I did not hope to fall in battle, I should lose my reason. You, gentlemen, speak of the day of Judgment and say it will soon dawn—I believe it is now here. Everything is falling to the ground; wickedness is getting the upper hand of virtue; anti-Christ is abroad in the world. You did not see all that happened, but, if you cannot even stand the description of it, how shall I describe to you the whole misfortune, the whole ignominy, which I witnessed with my own eyes! God gave us a favorable beginning to this war. Our prince, after he had passed sentence on Lashch at Cholhanski Kamyen, forgot everything else, and made friends with Prince Dominik. We were all delighted at this reconciliation and God's blessing seemed to rest upon it. The prince was victorious at Konstantinov and, even took the town, for the enemy forsook it after the first attack; then we went to Pilavyets, although the prince was opposed to it. But, on the way, we became aware of intrigues against him, envy and disaffection and open agitation. In the councils, his advice was not listened to; no attention was paid to it; and especial pains was taken to divide our forces, so that the prince should not have them all under his control. If he had then opposed them, he would have received all the blame for the defeat, so he was silent and patiently endured everything. Thus, the light cavalry by order of the commander-in-chief with Vurtsel and his cannon with Captain Makhnitski, remained in Konstantinov. They separated the Lithuanian field-commander Osinski and Korytski's squadron; so that all that remained with the prince were the Hussars under Zatsvilikhowski, two regiments of dragoons and a portion of my regiment under my command; in all, there were hardly two thousand men. From

that time, they seemed to despise him. I even heard some of Prince Dominik's favorites say, "If we can gain a victory now, they will not be able to say any longer that it was Vishnyovyetski's work alone;' and they talked and said that if the prince gained so much glory, his candidate Prince Charles would probably be elected when a king was chosen; and they did not wish him, but Prince Casimir. The whole army was affected by the contagion of their example, and groups of disputants were formed just as if Delegates were sent to the Diet—one thought of everything but the battle; just as if the enemy had already been defeated. If I were to tell you, gentlemen, about the dinners and vivats, and the luxury there, you would hardly believe me. The armies of Pyrrhus, gleaming with gold, jewels, and ostrich plumes, were nothing in comparison with this army. With two hundred thousand followers and a multitude of carriages followed us; the horses swayed beneath the weight of the gold stuffs and silk tents and the carriages beneath the weight of crockery, etc. It would appear that we were setting out to conquer the whole world. The noblemen belonging to the militia cracked their whips day and night. 'How can we keep the peasants in order without drawing our swords,' said they. And we, old soldiers, foresaw evil at the sight of this unparalleled pride. And now began the trouble about Kisyelov. Some maintained that he was a traitor, others that he was an honorable Senator. Heated with drink, men fought with swords. There were no sentries, no one maintained order, no one carried on any supervision; each did as he wished, went where it seemed to him best, stood where it pleased him best. The servants created a disturbance—Oh merciful God, that was a pleasure trip, no military expedition; a carnival upon which the honor of the Commonwealth was danced away, drunk away, ridden away—and, finally, traded away."

"We are yet alive," said Pan Volodiyovski.

"And God is in heaven," added Skshetuski.

Another pause, and then Vyershul continued:

"We are totally ruined, unless God works a miracle; ceases to punish us for our sins and shows us undeserved mercy. There are moments, when, what I have seen, appears incredible to me and I feel as if it was all a nightmare. . . ."

"Go on, sir," said Zagloba, "you came to Pilavyets, and, after that?"

"And stopped there. What the commanders decided

there,—I do not know. At the Day of Judgment, they will give an account of it; for, if they had then attacked Khmyelnitski suddenly, he would have been beaten and completely routed, as true as God is in Heaven; in spite of the disorder, the want of discipline, the tumult and the lack of a leader. The 'blacks' there were already filled with fear; they were consulting how they should deliver up Khmyelnitski and the captains; and he, himself, was thinking of taking to flight. Our prince rode from tent to tent, praying, entreating, threatening, 'Let us make an assault otherwise the Tartars will come, let us attack them'—and he tore his hair—and the other leaders looked at one another, and nothing, nothing! They were drinking and holding a council. There was a rumor that the Tartars were coming; that the Khan was approaching with two hundred thousand horsemen—they continued their council. The prince shut himself up alone in his tent, for they had rebuffed him completely. It was already common talk among the soldiers that the Chancellor had forbidden Prince Dominik to begin a battle—that negotiations were being carried on. The disorder increased—finally the Tartars came, but God was yet with us on the first day. The prince attacked them; Osinski and Pan Lashch held out bravely; obliged the horde to vacate the field; killed a considerable number and then—"

Here Pan Vyersul's voice became inaudible.

"And then?" asked Zagloba.

"Then came a terrible, indescribable night. I remember, that I was keeping watch with my men beside the river, when, suddenly, I heard the thunder of cannon and a screaming in the Cossack camp, as if they were firing a salute. Then I remembered that they had told me yesterday that the whole Tartar force had not arrived, but only Tukhay Bey with a portion of them. I thought, therefore, when I heard them firing salutes, that the Khan must have come himself; until, all at once a tumult arose in our camp. I sprang forward with some of my men. What has happened? They answered 'the commanders have fled!' I hastened to Prince Dominik, he was gone; to the cup-bearer—he was gone; to the crown ensign—he was gone. Jesus of Nazareth! the soldiers were running about on the square; screams, shouts, crying, noise, tumult, the flash of torches in every direction. Where are the commanders? Where are the commanders? Others cried, To horse! To horse! Others, again, save yourself,

brothers! Treason! Treason!' Holding their hands in the air with wild looks, their eyes starting out of their heads, crowding each other, trampling, crushing each other, they mounted their horses and hurried off, blindly without their weapons. Others cast away helmets, armor, weapons, tents. Finally, the prince, in his silver armor appeared at the head of his hussars. Six torches were carried beside him. He stood up in his stirrups and cried, 'Gentlemen, I am still here; come to me!' His call remained unanswered; they heard nothing. They crowded upon the hussars, threw them into confusion, trampled men and horses to the ground, and we hardly succeeded in saving the prince. Then, the whole army, plunging over trampled fires in the darkness, like a rushing stream, like a swollen cataract; the whole army fled in wild terror, out of the camp; scattered, disappeared, fled. . There is no longer any army, no leaders, no commonwealth, only ignominy; and the Cossacks' foot is on the neck. . . "

Pan Vyershul groaned and pulled on the reins, for madness and despair had possession of him; and this despair was shared by the rest, who rode through the night and rain like men bereft of reason.

They had ridden for some time, Zagloba interrupted, "Without fighting a battle! Oh ye knaves, oh ye dogs! Do you remember how boastful they were in Zbaraj, how they were going to eat Khmyelnitski, without pepper and salt? Oh you knaves!"

"Why," cried Vyershul, "they fled after the first battle they won against the Tartars and the 'blacks'. After a battle in which even the militia fought like lions."

"This is the finger of God," said Skshetuski, "but there is some mystery here which must be cleared up."

"It is not unusual for soldiers to run away," said Volodiyovski, "but in this case, the leaders were the first to leave the camp; as though they would intentionally make the victory easier for their enemies, and give over their army to slaughter."

"That's just it, that's just it!" said Vyershul, "it is said that it was done on purpose."

"Done on purpose? By God's wounds that cannot be!"

"So it is said, but why? What is behind that? Who can guess?"

"Oh may the earth swallow them up, may their race die out and their memory be covered with everlasting ignominy," said Zagloba.

"Amen," said Skshetuski.
"Amen," said Volodiyovski.
"Amen," said Volodyovski.
"Amen," repeated Pon Longin.

There is only one man who can yet save the country; if they will give him the baton and the remaining powers of the Commonwealth. There is only one, for neither the nobility nor the army will hear of any other."

"The prince!" said Skshetuski.

"It is he."

"We will stand and fall with him—long live Yeremy Vishnyoyetski," cried Zagloba.

"Long may he live," answered about a score of unsteady voices. But the cry died away, for it was no time for cheers when the ground seemed to be opening under their feet, and the heavens seemed threatening to fall down on them. There was no time for shouts and vivats. Meanwhile, day was breaking and, in the distance, the walls of Tarnopol became visible in the dim morning light.

CHAPTER IX.

The first fugitives from Pilavyets reached Lemburg at daybreak on the 26th of September, at the moment that the gates of the town were opened. The dreadful news spread with the rapidity of lightning through the whole town, awakening in some, doubt and terror; in others, and these the greater number, the desire for a desperate battle. Skshetuski had arrived with his division two days later, when the town was already full of fugitive soldiery, nobility and armed citizens. They were already thinking of preparing for defence, as the Tartars were expected to arrive at any moment; but they did not yet know who would place himself at their head and what steps would be taken. Consequently, panic and disorder reigned. Many fled from the town to seek safety for their families and their possessions; but the dwellers in the vicinity, on the contrary, sought shelter in the town; the departing and entering crowds blocked the streets and caused tumults for the right of way. Everywhere might be seen carriages, packages, bundles and horses, also soldiers of the most varied uniforms. On all faces might be seen uneasiness and feverish expectation, despair or resignation. At every moment, like a sudden blast of wind, came fresh terror. Loud cries were heard; "they come! they come!" and the crowd rolled forward blindly like a wave, driven by mad fear, until they saw that a new company of fugitives was approaching: and these companies increased in number. But what a sad sight was presented by these soldiers, who, a short time before had marched out from here in gold and plumes; with songs on their lips and pride in their eyes to march against the peasant mob! To-day they came back, tattered, famished, haggard and covered with mud on weary horses, the signs of disgrace in their faces, more like beggars than knights. They might have aroused pity, if there had been time for any such feeling in this town, against whose walls the entire force of the enemy might soon be raging. And each one of these disgraced knights comforted himself with

the knowledge that he had so many thousands of ccmpanions in shame. All hid themselves in the first hour, in order to recover themselves, to make complaints, to utter curses and threats, to prowl about the streets, to drink in the wineshops and to increase, if possible, the disorder and the panic.

For each one repeated the same thing, "the Tartars are on our heels!" Some said they had seen smoke behind them; others swore by all the saints that they had already been obliged to defend themselves against their pursuers. The crowds who surrounded the soldiers, listened attentively to these tidings. The roofs and church towers were packed with thousands of anxious citizens, the alarm bells were rung; and a crowd of women and children choked the churches, in which, amid the glow of wax candles, gleamed the sacred host.

Skshetuski forced his way gradually with his company from the Halitski gate through crowds of horses, wagons, soldiers, and through groups of citizens who were standing beneath their banners and through the people who looked in astonishment at this squadron which moved in perfect battle order through the town. They began to shout to one another that help was coming and, at once a most baseless joy took possession of the populace, who crowded round Skshetuski in order to seize his stirrup; other soldiers approached with the cry, "Those are Vishnyovyetski's men! Long live Prince Yeremy." Such a crowd collected that the regiment could only move forward a step at a time.

Suddenly a division of dragoons, with an officer at their head came towards them. The soldiers separated the crowd, the officer crying, "Out of the way! Make room!" and striking with the flat of his sword those who did not immediately move out of his way.

Skshetuski recognized Kushel.

The young officer heartily greeted his friend.

"What times! What times!" he said.

"Where is the prince?" asked Skshetuski.

"He would have died of sorrow if you had remained away much longer. He was already very anxious about you and your men. He is now in the Convent of St. Bernard. I am sent out to keep order in the town but Grozvayer has already taken hold of the thing. I will ride with you to the church. They are going to hold a council there."

"In the church?"

"Yes, they want to offer the prince the baton of field-marshal; for the soldiers declare that they will not defend the town under any other leader."

"Let us go, then, I also am in a hurry to see the prince."

The two companies united and rode off together. On the way, Skshetuski enquired about everything that had happened in Lemburg and if they had decided to defend it.

"They are just considering the matter," said Kushel, "The citizens want to defend it. What times these are! The men of lower rank show more heart than the nobles and the soldiers."

"And the Commanders? What has happened to them? Are they in the town, and will they not make difficulties for the prince?"

"If he only does not make any himself! There have been more favorable opportunties of giving him the field-marshal's baton; now it is too late. The commanders dare not let themselves be seen. Prince Dominik rested for a short time in the archbishop's palace and then went on his way. It was well he did so, for you cannot believe how bitter the soldiers are against him. Although he has gone, they still keep crying, 'Give him to us! We will cut him down!' He would not have escaped an attack. The cup-bearer arrived here first, and he actually began to complain of the prince; but now he is quiet, very quiet; for he has been threatened, too. They accuse him to his face, and he only swallows his tears. Everything is dreadful; what these times are! I tell you, I thank God that you were not at Pilavyets; that you did not need to fly, for it is a wonder that all who were there did not go crazy."

"And our division?"

"No longer exists! Hardly one man remains! Vurtsel is lost, Makhnitski and Zatsvilikhovski are also lost. Vurtsel and Makhnitski were not at Pilavyets for they remained in Konstantinov. That Beelzebub, Prince Dominik, left them behind there in order to weaken our prince's power. No one knows if they escaped or were taken by the enemy. Old Zatsvilikhovski has disappeared like a stone in the water. God grant, he may not be killed."

"Are many soldiers gathered here?"

"Enough; but what good does that do? The prince, alone, can restore order, if he takes the command; for they will obey no one else. The prince was terribly anxious about you

and the soldiers. Yours is the only entire regiment that is left. We were already mourning for you."

"Anyone who is mourned at this time, may count himself happy."

They rode for a time in silence, looking at the crowd and listening to the noise and the cry, "The Tartars! The Tartars!" They came across the horrible spectacle of a man torn in pieces, whom the crowd suspected of being a spy. The bells rang unceasingly.

"Will the horde be here soon?" asked Zagloba.

"The Devil knows. Perhaps they may be here to-day. This town cannot defend itself long. Khmyelnitski is coming with two hundred thousand Cossacks, beside the Tartars."

"The town is lost," answered the nobleman. "It would have been better for us to have ridden away at breakneck speed. To what end have we won so many victories!"

"Over whom?"

"Over Kshyvonos, Bohun, God knows over whom besides."

"But, . . . " said Kushel, and, turning to Skshetuski, he asked in a low voice: "And you, dear Yan, has not God comforted you? Have you not found what you sought? Have you at least heard any news?"

"Now is no time to think about that," cried Skshetuski. "Of what consequence am I and my affairs, in comparison to what has happened! All is vanity, vanity until at length death comes."

"That is true," said Kushel. "The whole world must be coming to an end very soon."

They had reached St. Bernard's church, which was brightly lighted. An enormous crowd of men stood before the church, but no one could enter, for a cordon of halberdiers defended the entrance and allowed only the more important officers to enter.

Skshetuski formed his men in two ranks. "Let us go in!" said Kushel. "Half the Commonwealth is in the church."

They entered. Kushel had not exaggerated much. All who were prominent in the army and in the town, had assembled to the council. There were in the church, Voyevodas, castellans, colonels, cavalry captains, foreign officers, spiritual dignitaries, a crowd of nobility, a number of officers of lower rank, and some civil officers under Grozvayer, who was in command of the citizens. There were present, also the prince, Cup-Bearer, one of the commanders, the Voyevoda of Kiev,

the Starosta of Stobnitski, and Vessel and Artsishevski, and the Lithuanian field marshal Pan Osinski. These sat before the high altar so that the public could see them. They took council in feverish haste, as is usual in such cases. The speakers rose on benches and conjured the chief officers not to give the town into the hands of the enemy without resistance. "And though we should ourselves be destroyed in the attempt, the town will hold out, the Commonwealth will recover! What do we need for defence? The walls are there, the soldiers are there and the determination is there—only the leader is lacking!" And, as this was said, a murmur arose in the crowd, which soon resolved itself into a loud shout. The people were seized with enthusiasm. "We will die, we will willingly die," they cried, "to wipe out the disgrace of Pilavyets; to save the country!" And now was heard a clashing of swords and the bare blades gleamed in the candle light while some called out, "Calm yourselves, let us take council quietly. Shall we defend ourselves, or shall we not?"

"We will defend ourselves! We will defend ourselves!" cried the crowd, so that the walls rang. "We will defend ourselves! Who will lead us, who is our leader? Prince Yeremy —he is our leader, he is a hero! He will defend the town and the Commonwealth will give him the command—long live Yeremy!"

Now, from a thousand throats arose a shout that made the walls tremble and the panes in the church windows rattle.

"Yeremy! Yeremy! Long live the Prince! Long live the Prince! Victory to him!"

A thousand sword-blades glittered; all eyes were turned towards the prince and he rose quietly with a furrowed brow. Instantly there was a deep silence:

"Gentlemen," said the prince in a sonorous voice which, amid the silence, reached every ear, "when the Cimbri and the Teutons attacked the Roman Commonwealth, no one cared to undertake the consulate, until Marius took it. But Marius had the right to seize it, for no leader had been chosen by the Senate. . . . And I would not seek flight amid this danger, but would dedicate my life to my beloved fatherland; but I dare not accept the baton, as, by so doing, I might offend my country, the Senate and the higher authorities. I will not be a self-appointed leader. Among us is the man to whom the Commonwealth would give the baton—that is the Crown Cup-Bearer. . . . "

The prince was forced to stop speaking, for he had no sooner mentioned the name of the Cup-Bearer than a frightful noise and clashing of swords ensued. The crowd became restless, gave vent to their feelings and flamed up like powder to which a spark has been applied. "Away with him! Kill him! Pereat!" echoed through the crowd. "Pereat, pereat!" sounded in louder tones.

The Cup-Bearer sprang from his seat, pale, with large beads of cold perspiration on his forehead. Threatening forms approached nearer the altar, and, already, were heard the ominous words, "Give him to us!"

The prince, who saw what turn things were taking, stood up and stretched forth his right hand.

The crowd stopped short. They thought the prince was going to speak. In a moment all was quiet. But the prince only wished to quiet the storm, to quell the tumult, to allow no shedding of blood in the church; and he sat down again when he saw that the danger was over. Separated from him only by the Voyevoda of Kiev sat the unfortunate Cup-Bearer. His gray head had sunk on his breast, his hands hung listlessly at his side and, from his mouth came these words, broken with sobs:

"Lord! for my sins I am willing to bear my cross."

The old man might have awakened pity in the hardest heart; but the mob is usually unmerciful; and the noise began afresh. Suddenly the Voyevoda of Kiev stood up, and motioned with his hand that he was about to speak. He was a companion in arms of Prince Yeremy, so that the people listened to him willingly.

"He, however, turned to the prince and conjured him in the most touching manner not to refuse the offer of the baton and not to fail to save his country. "When the Commonwealth is in danger, let all private discord cease. She will not be saved by him who has been appointed, but by him who is most competent to save her."

"Take the baton, thou unconquered hero! Take it! Save her! Not the town alone, the whole Commonwealth. In her name, I, the old man, entreat thee; and, with me, all ranks, all men, all women and children entreat thee, save us—save us!"

Something now occurred which moved all hearts. A woman in deep mourning approached the altar and, casting some jewels and gold ornaments at the feet of the prince, she

kneeled before him and cried, sobbing loudly, "We bring thee our possessions! We give our lives into thy hands. Save us! Save us!—or we are lost."

At this sight, the Senators, the soldiery, and, with them the whole crowd broke into loud weeping and, with one voice, the cry resounded through the church:

"Save us!"

The prince covered his eyes with his hands and, when he raised his face, his lashes were wet with tears; but still he hesitated. What would be the effect on the Commonwealth if he should accept the dignity of Commander.

Now the Cup-Bearer arose.

"I am old," he said, "unhappy, and bowed with care. I ought to lay down the burden which is beyond my strength. In the sight of the Crucified One, and of the assembled knights, I deliver up my baton—take it!"

And he handed the symbol of his office to Prince Vishnyovyetski. There was a moment of such deep silence that one might have heard the winging of a fly, then Prince Yeremy's voice was heard, saying in solemn tones:

"For my sins—I will accept it."

Now ensued a wild scene in the crowd. They pressed forward, fell at the feet of the prince and cast their treasures and gold before him. The news flew like lightning through the whole town, the soldiers were almost crazy with joy, and cried that they would march against Khmyelnitski, the Tartars and the Sultan. The citizens no longer thought of giving themselves up, but only of defending themselves, to the last drop of blood. The Armenians brought voluntary gifts of money to the town hall some time before there was any talk of an assessment. The Jews, in their synagogues, raised a cry of gratitude. The cannon on the ramparts announced the joyful news; in the streets, muskets, guns and pistols were fired. The cry, "Long live Yeremy!" continued the whole night. Whoever did not understand the situation might have thought that the town was celebrating a great triumph, or was keeping a feast.

And, yet, at any moment, three hundred thousand of the enemy, a larger army than the emperor of Germany, or the French king, could call into the field, and more savage than Tamerlane's forces, might besiege the walls of this town.

CHAPTER X.

A week afterwards, on the morning of the sixth of October, the terrible and unexpected news was spread in Lemburg that Prince Yeremy, taking with him the greater part of the army, had left the town and no one knew whither he had gone.

Groups of people collected before the archbishop's palace; at first they would not believe the news. The soldiers surmised that if the prince had really gone it must have been at the head of a large division of the army to explore the neighborhood. It was said that deserters had spread false reports, for they affirmed that at any moment Khmyelnitski and the Tartars might appear. And since the twenty-sixth day of September, ten days had already passed without any sign of the enemy. The prince wished to convince himself with his own eyes whether there was any danger and would probably return when he had verified the reports. Besides, he had left several regiments, and everything in readiness for defence.

This was what really happened. All kinds of orders were given, posts assigned and the cannon brought on the ramparts. In the evening Captain Tsikhotski arrived with fifty dragoons. They were surrounded at once by an eager crowd, but he would not talk with them, but went straight to General Artsishevski. They both sent for Grozvayer, and after a consultation went to the Town Hall. Tsikhotski there told the terrified audience that the prince had gone, never to return.

At the first moment, all were thunder-struck and bold voices cried, "Traitor!" But Artsishevski at once arose. He was an old man, celebrated as a leader for his great services in the Holland army, and he spoke as follows to the soldiers and the councillors:

"I have heard insulting words that had better never been spoken, for despair could not justify them. The prince has gone away and will never return—that is true; but what right have you to demand that a leader, upon whose shoulders rests the salvation of the whole country, should defend your little town alone; what would happen if the rest of the army of the

Commonwealth were surrounded by the enemy? We have here neither provisions, nor arms, nor food, for such a large army. Moreover, I tell you, and you may believe my words, that the more soldiers you have shut up here, the shorter the time of defence will last, for hunger would besiege us sooner than the enemy. Khmyelnitski cares more for the person of the prince than he does for your town. When he finds out, therefore, that he is no longer here; that he has collected a new army and may come here to garrison it; he will be the more likely to give in to you and listen to negotiations. To-day you grumble, but I tell you that the prince, in leaving this town and threatening Khmyelnitski from outside, is protecting you and your children. Contain yourselves, defend yourselves, keep off the enemy for a time, and you will not only save the town, but render the Commonwealth an everlasting service. For the prince can meanwhile gather new forces and garrison other fortresses. The torpid Commonwealth will rouse itself from slumber and hasten to your assistance. He has opened the only way of salvation; for if he had fallen a sacrifice to hunger with his forces, no one would have remained to repulse the enemy; who might then go without resistance to Cracow and Warsaw and swarm over the whole country. Therefore, instead of grumbling, run to the walls to defend yourselves, your children, the town, and the whole Commonwealth."

"To the walls! To the walls!" repeated several bold voices.

Grozvayer, an energetic and courageous man, remarked:

"Your silence, gentlemen, pleases me, and let me tell you that your prince has not gone away without arranging everything for the defence. Everybody knows what to do. What has happened, had to happen. I have charge of the defence and I will protect you till death."

Hope kindled anew in the anxious hearts, and Tsikhotski then took up the word:

"His Excellency sends word that the enemy is at hand. Lieutenant Skshetuski with one of his wings came across a Tartar chambul of two thousand men and defeated them. The prisoners say that an enormous force is following them."

This news made a great impression. There were a few moments of silence and all hearts beat joyfully. "To the ramparts!" said Grozvayer.

"To the ramparts! To the ramparts!" repeated the assembled officers and citizens.

At this moment, a noise was heard outside the windows. Thousands of voices arose from a roaring crowd, that resembled the waves of the sea. Suddenly the door was opened with violence, several citizens dashed through it; and, before the council had time to ask what had happened, a shout arose:

"Flames in the sky! Flames in the sky!"

"And the Word is become flesh!" said Grozvayer. "To the ramparts! ! ! To the ramparts! ! !"

The hall was deserted.

A moment later, the thunder of cannon shook the walls of the town and made the inhabitants tremble, announcing to the suburbs and the outlying villages that the enemy was at hand. The eastern sky was blood red as far as the eye could reach. It looked as though a sea of fire was approaching the town.

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The prince, meanwhile, had marched to Zamost, and after he had destroyed the little Tartar camp of which Tsikhotski had spoken, he set to work to repair and garrison it, as it was already a natural fortress; and, in a short time, had rendered it impregnable. Skshetuski, with Pan Longin and a portion of the squadron in the citadel, had remained with Pan Veyherz, the Starotsa of Valetsk; the prince proceeded to Warsaw in order to demand from the Diet means to provide a fresh force, and also to take part in the election of the king, which was to be held at that time. Vishnyovyetski's fate and that of the whole Commonwealth hung on this election; for, if Prince Charles were elected, the war party would maintain the upper hand—the prince would receive the chief command over the united armies of the Commonwealth and it would lead up to a decisive battle, for death or life, with Khmyelnitski. Prince Casimir, although well known for his personal courage and for his warlike character, was justly considered a partisan of Chancellor Ossolinski, whose politics tended to negotiations with the Cossacks and the granting to them of great concessions. Both brothers made no end of promises and strove to increase the number of their followers. Consequently, as they each had an equal chance, no one could foresee the result of the election. The chancellor's party feared that Vishnyovyetski, thanks to his ever-increasing fame and the love which the nobility and the knights bore him, would obtain a majority for Prince Charles; and

the prince, on account of these apprehensions, desired to support his candidate in person. Therefore he hastened to Warsaw, with the certainty that Zamost was in a condition to stand a long siege against the whole strength of Khmyelnitski and the Crimea. Lemburg might, to all appearances, be regarded as secure; for Khmyelnitski would certainly not waste time in storming this town when he had the far more important Zamost before him; which blocked his way into the heart of the Commonwealth. These thoughts cheered the prince and filled his heart with renewed confidence, which he needed, in his present anxious condition regarding the fate of his country. He hoped surely that, even if Casimir were chosen, he would see that the war had became an unavoidable necessity, and that this terrible rebellion could only be drowned in a sea of blood. He expected also that the Commonwealth would fit out another army; for even negotiations could not be carried on without the assistance of a mighty military force.

Lulled by such thoughts, the prince, under the protection of several regiments, rode alongside Zagloba and Volodiyovski; the former swore by all he held dear that he would bring about the election of Prince Charles, as he knew how to talk to his noble brethren and how to take them. The latter commanded the Prince's escort. In Siennits, not far from Minsk, the Prince was surprised by an agreeable and quite unexpected meeting. He found Princess Grizelda there. She was hastening from Bjesh-Litevsk to Warsaw, so as to be in greater safety, and also with the hope that she might find the prince there. Their meeting was a very happy one and all the more so as it was so unexpected. The princess, although a woman of iron courage, threw herself with sobs and tears into the arms of her husband and could not be quieted for some hours; for how often had she given up all hope of ever seeing him again. And now God had permitted him to return more famous than ever, with more veneration accorded him than any of his race had yet received.

The greatest leader, the one hope of the Commonwealth. The princess, raising her head from his shoulder, looked through her tears at his tanned, emaciated face, at his noble forehead, upon which care and fatigue had traced deep furrows, at his eyes, red and weary from sleepless nights; and her tears flowed afresh and all her ladies of honor wept with her from the depths of their hearts. Gradually she became

calmer, and accompanied by the prince went into the spacious house of the provost. And then began questions and inquiries about friends, about courtiers and knights who had been considered as part of their own family, and who were associated in her memory with Lubni. The prince quieted her anxiety about Pan Skshetuski and explained to her that he had only remained in Zamost because, amidst all the sorrow that God had laid on him, he could not endure the noise of the capital, but preferred rough military service, in order to deaden the wounds of his heart. The prince then introduced Pan Zagloba and praised his exploits. "This is an incomparable man," he said, "who not only snatched the young Panna Kurtsevich out of Bohun's hands, but also led her in safety through Khmyelnitski's camp, and through the midst of the Tartars; and also conducted himself in the most praiseworthy manner at Konstantinov." When the princess heard this, she was profuse in her compliments to Pan Zagloba, repeatedly held out her hand for him to kiss and promised him at some future time a better reward. The incomparable man bowed low, maintaining the modesty of a hero; and then he became puffed up and winked over at the court ladies; for, although he was old and did not make any further conquests among the fair sex, he was yet flattered that so many had heard of his bravery and his exploits. But this meeting was not one of unmixed joy; for, apart from the thought of the sad times that oppressed the Commonwealth, the princess was painfully affected when, in answer to her frequent inquiries for this or the other well-known knight, she received the answer, "He is dead, he is dead, he has fallen!" The young ladies were also cast down, for among these names were more than one that they loved.

Thus joy was blended with sadness, and tears with smiles. But the one who grieved the most was Pan Volodiyovski, for in vain he looked round him on all sides and cast his eyes in every direction—Princess Barbara was not to be seen. Indeed, during the fatigues of war, the continual battles, encounters and marches, this cavalier, who was by nature as susceptible in love as he was inconstant, had partially forgotten his fair lady. But now, when he saw the court ladies of the princess and the life in Lubni came vividly to his mind, he thought to himself that, now the hour of rest had arrived, it would be agreeable to sigh and to awaken afresh the flame of his heart. But, as he could not do this and his old inclina-

tion, as if out of obstinacy awoke once more, Pan Volodiyovski grieved greatly and looked as if drenched by rain. He hung his head, and his slender moustachios, which were usually twisted upwards till the ends almost reached his nostrils like the feelers of a cockchafer, now hung down too. His pug nose seemed to grow longer, his face had lost its ordinary cheerful expression, and he stood still, and did not move, even when the prince in turn praised his courage and his remarkable endowments. What did he care for words of praise if she could not hear them?

Anusia Borzobahata took pity on him, and although they continually had spats she resolved to comfort him. With this intention, after casting a side glance at the princess, she moved gradually nearer to the knight until she was close beside him.

"Good morning, Pan," she said, "we have not seen one another for a long time."

"Alas, Panna Anna," answered Pan Michael, in a melancholy voice, "a flood of water has poured over us since then and we meet in sad times and not all of us."

"It is true, that not all of us are here, for many knights have been killed."

Here Anna sighed and presently continued: "Our number is smaller than it was, for Panna Syenyutovna is married and Princess Barbara remained with the Voyevodovna of Vilna."

"And she will be married, too."

"No, she is not thinking about that yet; but why do you ask, Sir?"

As she said this she dropped her dark little eyes so that only the eyelids were visible and looked askance beneath her lashes at the knight.

"On account of my well wishes for the family," answered Pan Michael.

"That is right, Pan Michael," answered Anusia, "for Princess Barbara is a very good friend of yours. She often asked 'where is my young knight who at the tourney in Lubni has thrown down so many Turkish heads, for which I rewarded him? What is he doing? I wonder if he is alive and still remembers us?' "

Pan Michael raised his eyes gratefully to Anusia and was happy, and then observed that Anna had improved remarkably.

"Did Princess Barbara really say that?" he asked.

"As true as I live and—she remembered how you jumped across the moat for her that time you fell into the water."

"And where is Pani Voyevodovna of Vilnanov?"

"She was with us in Brest Litovski, a week ago she went to Belsk, and from there will go to Warsaw."

Volodiyovski looked at Anusia the second time and could not contain himself any longer.

"And you, Panna Anna," he said, "have grown so beautiful that it fairly blinds one to look at you."

The girl smiled thankfully.

"Pan Michael, you are only saying this to capture me."

"I might have done it once," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "God knows I tried it and could not, and now—I wish Pan Podbipyenta happiness."

"And where is Pan Podbipyenta?" asked Anusia in a low tone, with her eyes cast down.

"In Zamost with Skshetuski. He has been promoted to the lieutenancy and is in active service, but if he had known whom he would see here, as true as God is in heaven, he would have taken leave and ridden here with giant strides. He is a great cavalier who deserves every favor."

"And did he meet with reverses in the war?"

"It seems to me that you don't want to ask that, but whether he has got the three heads that he was determined to cut off."

"I do not believe that he meant that in earnest."

"And yet, you must believe it, Panna; without those heads, he can do nothing. He is seeking every opportunity to find them. At Makhnovka, we even rode into the middle of the battle, in which he was fighting his way in the crowd, in order to look at him. The prince himself was with us, for I must tell you that I have been in many battles, but I never saw such slaughter as I saw there, and I will never forget it. When he fastens your scarf round him, he can fight terribly. He will find his three heads. Do not be anxious."

"May each one find what they seek," said Anusia, sighing.

Volodiyovski also sighed and turned his eyes to the ceiling. He was suddenly surprised at something he saw in one corner of the room.

In this corner an angry, fiery face entirely unknown to him, was staring at him. This face possessed a gigantic nose, and moustaches that looked like wisps and twitched nervously as if in suppressed passion.

Any one might have been frightened for that nose, those eyes and moustaches, but little Pan Volodiyovski was not at all backward, therefore, as said above, he only wondered, and turning to Anusia, asked: "What kind of man is that in the corner who is looking at me as if he would like to swallow me, which moved quickly, like an old Tom cat at prayers?"

"That, said Anna, showing her little white teeth, "that is Pan Kharlamp."

"What kind of a heathen is that?"

"He is no heathen at all, but the Captain in the light horse, of the Voyevoda of Vilna, who is taking us to Warsaw and is to wait there for the Voyevoda. Do not offend him, Pan Michaël, for he is a great man-eater."

"I see that, I see that; but if he is a man-eater there are fatter morsels than I. Wherefore should he sharpen his teeth on me and not on some one else?"

"Because . . " said Anusia, giggling gently.

"Because what?"

"Because he is in love with me and told me himself that he would tear anyone to pieces who came near me and now—believe me—it is only the presence of the prince and princess that prevents him from seeking a quarrel with you immediately."

"Now you have it!" said Pan Volodiyovski, gladly. "Is that so, Panna Anna? Oh, I see now that it was not in vain that we sang, 'Like unto a Tartar horde, hast thou taken captive the heart.' Do you remember, Panna? You cannot move from one place to another without someone falling in love with you?"

"That is my misfortune," said Anna, with her eyes cast down.

"Ah, what a Pharisee you are! What would Pan Longin say?"

"Is it my fault that this Pan Kharlamp follows me? I cannot bear him; I do not want to see him."

"Well, well, see to it, Panna, that he does not shed any blood on your account. You can dress a wound with Podbipyenta, but when it comes to a question of love it is dangerous to trifle with him."

"I wish he would cut off his ears, I would be glad of it."

As she said this, she whirled round like a top and in a moment was on the other side of the room beside Pan Carboni the prince's medical attendant, to whom she whispered

much and entered into a lively conversation. The Italian fixed his gaze on the ceiling as if he were in perfect ecstasy.

Meanwhile Zagloba had approached Volodiyovski, and winked at him roguishly with his sound eye.

"Pan Michael," he said, "who is that crested lark?"

"Panna Anna Borzobahata-Krashyenska, the lady-in-waiting to the princess."

"And a fine creature. Eyes like saucers, little mouth like a picture and a neck—ah!"

"Nothing! Nothing!"

"I congratulate you!"

"Give us peace, Sir; that is Pan Longin's fiancee; or as good as his betrothed."

"Pan Longin? But by God's wounds! He has made a vow of chastity, and besides even if there is this understanding between them, he could hide her behind his coat collar; she could perch upon his moustache like a fly—what now?"

"Yes, she will manage him; Hercules was stronger, and yet a woman outwitted him."

"If only she does not play him false, but I, as true as I am Zagloba, will do my best to bring that about."

"There are many others in your position, although she is a good girl and comes from a good family. It is a pity because she is young and pretty."

"You praise her because you are a true cavalier, but she is a great flirt, I am certain of it."

"Beauty attracts people; as, for example, do you see that captain yonder? they say he is dreadfully in love with her."

"Pshaw! And just look at that crow she is taiking to now. Who the devil is he?"

"That is the Italian Carboni, the prince's physician."

"Watch, Pan Michael, how his gig lamps sparkle and look as though they were in delirium. Ah, it is bad for Pan Longin. I know something about it, for when I was young I had many experiences. At a suitable time, I will tell you about all that I went through; but, if you care, I will tell you at once."

Zagloba began to whisper into the little knight's ear and to blink more furiously than ever, but just then came the command to proceed on the journey. The prince got into the carriage with the princess in order to converse freely after their long separation. The young court ladies were in the other carriages, the knights mounted their horses and all

set out. In the van, were the court suite, the soldiers a little behind them; for the country was quiet in this region, and the escort was only for form not for safety. They went therefore from Siennits to Minsk and from there to Warsaw, making frequent stops, as was the custom at that time. The highway was so packed that they advanced very slowly. Everyone from far and near was hastening to the elections, from far and near even from far Lithuania. Here and there whole noblemen's suites met each other, whole trains of gilt coaches surrounded by Hayduks dressed in Turkish manner, behind whom came the court companies, Hungarian and German; now divisions of Janissaries; now Cossacks, and finally, the important squadrons of the inconquerable Polish cavalry. Each of the more distinguished Poles endeavored to appear with as much gorgeousness, display, and number of followers as possible. Beside the numerous cavalcades of the magnates, moved the smaller and less important district and provincial dignitaries. Every now and then, from out the clouds of dust, appeared a single nobleman's carriage, and in each carriage sat a nobleman, or a priest with a crucifix or an image of the Holy Virgin on his breast, attached to a silk ribbon. All were armed with a musket on one side and a sword on the other, and among the active or retired officers, lances protruded nearly two yards at the back of the saddle. Pointers and greyhounds ran in and out among the carriages, not for hunting, since it was not on a hunting expedition, but for the amusement of their owners. In the rear, pages led horses with costly saddles that were covered completely so as to protect the costly equipments from dust and rain. Then came creaking wagons with wheels made of woven reeds, carrying the tents and provisions for the masters and servants. When the wind suddenly blew the dust from the highway, the procession was wrapped in a cloud and looked like a hundred colored serpent, or a ribbon embroidered in mystical figures in golden silk. Here and there the joyous strains of Italian bands or of the Janissaries might be heard, especially in the ranks of the royal and Lithuanian regular soldiers, of which there were numbers in that throng. These accompanied the procession as escort of the royal dignitaries. Everywhere were heard cries, noise, shouts, questions and wranglings, because one would not get out of another's way. From time to time soldiers and officers rode up to the prince's train with the request that they would

make room for one or the other dignitary, or else to inquire who was traveling here, but, as soon as they heard the answer, "The Voyevoda of Russia," they at once announced it to their masters, who then left the road clear, or if they were ahead turned aside to look at the prince's train. The nobles and the soldiers crowded together at the halting places, looking with eager eyes at the greatest warrior of the Commonwealth. There was no lack of cheers, for which the prince gracefully expressed his thanks, partly from his natural kindliness and partly in order to win adherents for Prince Charles, which were often captivated at the mere sight of him. The prince's regiments, those soldiers that were called Rusinow[1] were also regarded with the same curiosity. They were no longer ragged and worn, as after the battle of Konstantinov, for the prince had bought them new uniforms in Zamost. Nevertheless, the crowd gazed at them as though they were monsters from beyond the sea; for the inhabitants of some of the surrounding towns of the capital, thought that they came from the end of the world. They told one another wonderful stories about those mysterious steppes and forests, in which such knights were born; admired their faces that were browned by the wind from the Black Sea; their proud look, and a certain savagery of appearance that distinguished them from their wild neighbors.

But most of the glances, turned, after the prince, on Pan Zagloba; who, as soon as he noticed the surrounding people who were admiring him, looked sturdily and boldly and rolled his eye so frightfully, that the crowd began to whisper to one another, "He must be the most distinguished of all the knights," others said, "This fierce dragon must have driven many souls from their bodies." When such words reached Zagloba's ears, he endeavored to conceal his inward satisfaction by a still more fierce demeanor.

Now he spoke to the crowd; now he ridiculed them, and especially the companies of the Lithuanian horsemen, whose heavy cavalry wore a golden loop across their shoulders, while the light cavalry wore a silver one.

"What is it you have on, Pan Loop," cried Zagloba, at sight of them, and more than one ground their teeth and grasped their swords; but when they remembered that he belonged to a regiment of the Voyevoda of Russia they let it pass, spat on the ground, and avoided any quarrel.

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[1] Russians.

Near Warsaw, the crowd became so dense that one could hardly advance at all. The election of the king appeared to assemble more people than usual, for the nobility thronged hither from the farthest Russian and Lithaninan regions; not only on account of the election but also to seek safety in Warsaw. And yet the election would not be for several days, as the first assembly of the Diet had hardly begun; but everyone went there one or two months in advance in order to find quarters in the city; to bring themselves to the remembrance of this one or the other one; to look for promotion and invitations to dinner at the different lord's houses; and, in fact, after the harvest to enjoy the luxury of the capital. The prince looked through the windows of his carriage at this crowd of knights, soldiers and nobles; at this wealth; at these gorgeous clothes; and thought how many soldiers he could have armed with that money; what an army he could have sent into the field. How did it happen that a Commonwealth that was so thickly populated and so rich and full of valiant knights should be so powerless that she could not protect herself against a Khmyelnitski and the wild Tartars, why was it? He could not understand. Khmyelnitski's thousands could be answered by more thousands, if this nobility, these soldiers, these riches and abundance, these regiments and squadrons would have served the public interests as readily as they did their own private interests. "There is no more virtue in the Commonwealth," thought the prince, "the great body is beginning to decay, the old valor has become enervated in the delights of comfort. The nobles and the soldiery no longer love the fatigues of war." The prince was partially right, but he considered the situation of the Commonwealth from the standpoint of a warrior and a leader who would willingly have turned every man into a soldier and would have led him against the enemy. Valor was still to be found and came to the front, when a little later, much more serious wars threatened the Commonwealth. She lacked another thing that the martial prince did not foresee at this moment, but that his enemy the Crown Chancellor, who was a more experienced statesman than Prince Yeremy, well understood.

The pointed towers of Warsaw gleamed in the gray distance. The Prince's reflections were interrupted and he gave orders which the officers on duty imparted to Volodiyovski, the leader of the escort. Consequently, Pan Michael left his

place at the side of Anusia's carriage, where he had been riding, in order to join his company, which was some way behind and bring them up with the rest. He had not gone many steps when he heard somebody coming up behind him. He looked round—it was Pan Kharlamp, Captain of the Voyevoda of Vilna's light cavalry, Anusia's adorer. Volodiyovski reined in his horse for he understood at once that he would have to meet this man; and Pan Michael loved such things with his whole soul. Pan Kharlamp rode up beside him and, at first, said nothing; but panted and tugged fiercely at his moustache, evidently seeking for words. Finally he said :

"I greet you, Pan Dragoon."

"I greet you, Pan of the Line."

"How dare you call me that?" asked Kharlamp, grinding his teeth, "me, a captain, and a companion in arms, eh?"

Pan Volodiyovski began to throw into the air the little axe, which he had in his hand, his whole attention apparently being only directed to endeavoring to catch it by the handle at every turn, and he answered indifferently:

"Because I do not recognize your rank by your loop.'

"You insult officers with whom you are not equal."

"And why?" innocently asked the rascal Volodiyovski.

"Because you are serving in a foreign regiment."

"Calm yourself," said Pan Michael, "even if I am in the dragoons, I am an officer and not one of the least, but in the highest rank of the Voyevoda's service. You can therefore speak to me as your equal, or as your superior."

Pan Kharlamp began to understand that he was not dealing with a person of no importance, as he imagined; but he continued to grind his teeth, for Volodiyovski's indifference made him still more angry. He said, therefore:

"How did you dare to get in my way?"

"Oh, I see you are anxious for a quarrel."

"Perhaps, and I will tell you one thing," here Pan Kharlamp leaned over to Volodiyovski and said in a low tone:

"I will cut your ears off if you get in my way where Panna Anna is concerned."

Volodiyovski again twirled his little axe, as if his right hand were accustomed to such play, and said mockingly to Pan Kharlamp.

"Oh, gracious sir, permit me to live a little longer—permit me—permit me."

"No, that will not do, you cannot escape me so easily," said Pan Kharlamp seizing the little knight by the arm.

"I will try not to escape you," said Volodiyovski, gently; "but, at present, I am on duty and am hurrying to execute my master's orders. Let go my sleeve, sir, let it go, I beg you; for otherwise there will be nothing left for me to do but to —to cut you over the head with this axe and knock you from your horse."

The voice which had commenced so gently now hissed so dangerously that Pan Kharlamp involuntarily looked at the little knight in astonishment and let go his sleeve.

"Oh, that makes no difference," he said, "you will have to meet me in Warsaw. I will not let you out of my sight."

"I will not hide myself, but how can we settle this affair in Warsaw? Have the goodness to tell me. I a simple soldier have never yet been there, but I have heard of court martials that punishes the unsheathing of a sword in the presence of the king, or his representative with death."

"One can see that you have never been in Warsaw and are a boor, as you fear the court; and do not know that during the interregnum the chapter dispenses justice. And in this case an explanation will be easy, and for the sake of your ears they would not be likely to cut off my head—believe me."

"I thank you for your information and beg for further instructions, for I see you are not a bad instructor and are also a well-informed man. And I, as a man who has only studied the minor sciences and hardly know how to make an adjective agree with a noun, should I venture, which may God forbid, to call you a fool, only wish to know if I should say stultus and not stulta or stultum."

Here Pan Volodiyovski again tossed his axe. Pan Kharlamp became embarrassed, and his face flushed, and drew his sword. At the same moment the little knight raised forth his axe and it gleamed in the air. They looked at one another for a moment like two aurochs, with distended nostrils and eyes flashing fire—but Pan Kharlamp was the first to remember that he would have to answer to the Voyevoda himself if he should attack any officer in his service, so he was the first to sheath his sword:

"Oh, I will find you, you son. . . . " he said.

"You will find me? You will find me? You beet-broth!" said the little knight.

And they separated. One rode to join his cavalcade, the other to his regiment which had advanced during this time, and clouds of dust filled the air from the hoofs of the approaching horses. Pan Michael did not take long to place his regiment in order and to ride at their head. Presently, Zagloba trotted up to him.

"What did that sea-scarecrow want with you?" he asked Volodiyovski.

"Pan Kharlamp? Oh, nothing, he was only calling me out."

"Now you have it," said Zagloba. "He will bore you through with his nose. Look out, Pan Michael, if you fight with him, that you do not cut off the largest nose in the Commonwealth, for it would require an unusually large grave mound? How happy is the Voyevoda of Wilna! Others are obliged to send out military expeditions against the enemy, but this nobleman of his can scent the enemy from afar. But why does he call you out?"

"Because I rode beside Panna Anna Borzobahata's carriage."

"Pshaw! You should have told him to go to Pan Longin at Zamost. He would have received him with pepper and ginger; this beet-broth swiller's fortune is not so great as his nose."

"I said nothing to him about Pan Podbipyenta;" said Volodiyovski, "for how could I, as long as he left me in peace? Just out of obstinacy, I will make desperate love to Anusia; I shall get some enjoyment out of it and what can we find better to do in Warsaw?"

"We shall find something to do, Pan Michael, do not fear," said Zagloba, winking. In my young days when I was the regiment tribute collector we marched over the whole country; but nowhere did I find such gay life as in Warsaw."

"Do you think it is different from our life beyond the Dnieper?"

"There is no comparison."

"I am quite curious," said Pan Michael, and added, after a pause, "and I will nip this beet-broth swiller's moustache, for he wears it too long."

CHAPTER XI.

Several weeks had passed. Fresh nobles came crowding every day to the election. In the town the population had increased ten-fold; for, beside the crowd of nobles, thousands of merchants and bazaar traders came thither from different parts of the world, from distant Persia to the coasts of England beyond the sea. In the quarter of the town called Woli they had put up a wooden building for the Senate and round about it, might be seen already thousands of tents which completely covered the ground. No one knew as yet which of the two candidates would be elected, the king's son Casimir, the Cardinal, or Charles Ferdinand, the bishop of Plotski.

Both parties exerted themselves to the utmost. Thousands of circulars were distributed, setting forth the virtues and faults of the candidates. Both sides had many and powerful adherents. To Charles's party belonged, as we know, Prince Yeremy; and this was all the more dangerous for the opposite party that it seemed more and more probable that he would carry with him the nobility, who were very devoted to him and on whom everything depended; but Casimir was not lacking in strength. The provincial governors were on his side, and he had the influence of the chancellor. The Primate also seemed to favor him, and behind him stood the greater number of the magnates, each of whom had a considerable following. And, among these magnates was Prince Dominik Zaslovski-Ostrogski, Voyevoda of Sandomier, who, although actually dishonored after the affair of Pilavyets and even threatened with justice, was still the greatest Lord in the Commonwealth; yes, even in the whole of Europe; and had besides unlimited wealth to throw into the balance for his candidate.

Nevertheless, Casimir's adherents had many moments of bitter doubt; for, as we have said, everything finally depended on the nobility, who, from the fourth of October, had begun to pour into Warsaw and were still coming in by thousands from all parts of the Commonwealth; and carried away by

the greatness of Vishnyovyetski and the prince's interested generosity, declared one and all for Prince Charles. Charles was able and hospitable and did not fail on this occasion, to give considerable sums towards forming fresh regiments, which were to be placed under Vishnyovyetski's command. Casimir would willingly have followed his example and it was not stinginess, but on the contrary, a too great open-handedness which had caused continual depletion of his treasury that now prevented him from giving. During this time, active consultations were going on between the two parties. Messengers were sent daily between Nyeporenta and Yablonna. Casimir, on account of his seniority and in consideration of brotherly love conjured Prince Charles to withdraw and leave the field clear for him, but the bishop would not listen to this request, and wrote that it was not right to turn away any fortune that might come to him, especially as this fortune was in accordance with the suffrage of the whole Comonwealth which had nominated him for its ruler. And meanwhile the time passed, the six weeks interval was coming to a close and, with it, the terror of the Cossacks; for news had arrived that Khmyelnitski had raised the siege of Lemburg, after storming it several times, and that he was now before Zamost, the last rampart of the Commonwealth, which he was storming day and night.

It was also said that besides the ambassador whom Khmyelnitski had sent with a letter, and an announcement that, as a Polish nobleman, he declared in favor of Prince Casimir, he had sent to Warsaw a whole swarm of disguised Cossack captains who had sneaked into the ranks of the nobility without being recognized. They were dressed like the true nobility, and could not be distinguished from them even in their speech; and were especially like the nobility from the Russian district. Some had gone there, it was said, out of pure curiosity; in order to see the election festivities and to see Warsaw; others had gone to find out what was said about the coming war; how many soldiers the Commonwealth could put in the field and what money she had to spend on it. Much that was told about these guests might be true; for, among the Zaporojian captains there were many noblemen who lived in the Cossack fashion and also understood Latin, which made it all the more difficult to recognize them. In the farther steppes, Latin did not flourish and people even like the princess Kurtsevich did not understand it, as well as Bohun and other atamans.

These and similar umors which had circulated in the town, as well as in the election camp, combined with the news of Khmyelnitski's approach and the expeditions of the Cossacks and Tartars who were advancing to the Vistula, filled men's hearts with fear and unrest, and often gave rise to tumults. It was quite enough among the assembled nobility to suspect anyone of being a Zaporojian in disguise and, in a moment, before he could justify himself, he was cut to pieces by their swords. In this manner, several innocent men came to their death and the dignity and earnestness of the election suffered in consequence; especially as, in those times, drunkenness was not looked upon with much disfavor. The Chapter for the security of the place could not restrain the continual disputes which at the first opportunity turned into a fight. But if earnest men who were filled with love of good and of peace lamented these tumults in the face of the danger which threatened their country, the frivolous, the fighters and the drunkards, the dice throwers and ruffians who were in their element, considered this time as their period of harvest and committed all sorts of misdemeanors with the greatest audacity.

It is not necessary to say that Pan Zagloba was their leader, as one might have supposed from his distinguished position, as well as his insatiable thirst for drink, and his fluent tongue, which was equalled by none, and his absolute self-confidence which nothing could shake. At times he was even attacked by melancholy and then he shut himself up in his room or in the tent, saw no one; and, when he came out, he was in a horrible temper and ready for serious quarrels and fighting. It transpired that, in a similar humor, he had wounded Pan Dunchevski of Ravianina severely; for no other reason than, that in passing by, he had pushed against Zagloba's sword: At such times, he could endure the company of no one but Pan Michael, to whom he then complained that a longing to see Skshetuski and the 'poor girl' was consuming him. "We have forsaken them, Pan Michael," he would say, "like traitors we have given them over into ungodly hands and you cannot excuse yourself with your nemine excepto! What do you suppose is happening to her, Pan Michael?"

It was in vain that Pan Michael told him that if the catastrophe at Pilavyets had not overtaken them they would have sought the "poor girl;" but that now it was impossible,

as the whole might of Khmyelnitski's forces separated her from them. The nobleman however would not be comforted, but became more furious; and even swore that the world now consisted only of feather quilts, childishness and Latinity.

These attacks of sadness, however, only lasted a short time; and, after they were over, Zagloba drank and caroused more than ever, as though to make up for lost time. He passed most of his time in the wine shops, in the company of the greatest sots or women of the town, and Pan Michael was his faithful companion.

Pan Michael, an excellent soldier and officer, had not the slightest degree of that earnestness which misfortune and sorrow had developed in Skshetuski. He fulfilled his duties to the Commonwealth, in striking wherever he was told, and did not bother himself about anything else. He did not understand public affairs. He grieved over a mischance of war, but it did not occur to him that these tumults and brawls were just as injurious to the country as a defeat in battle. In one word, he was a flighty youngster and, having once been swallowed up in the whirlpool of the capital, was submerged to his ears and hung like a chain round Zagloba who was his master in deviltry. He rode about, therefore, with the other nobles, to whom Zagloba told the most incredible things over the wine, gained adherents for Prince Charles, drank with Zagloba, screened him in emergencies, and went everywhere with him, to the electioneering camp and about the town together like flies in boiling water, there was no corner they did not penetrate. They were seen in Nyeporenta in Yablonna and at all the dinners and suppers at the houses of the magnates and in the inns; in fact everywhere, and they enjoyed everything. Pan Michael's young palm itched to make itself felt and to prove that the Ukranian nobles were better than any other; and that the Prince's soldiers are above all others. So they rode off to look for adventure among the Lenchytsans who were the best swordsmen, and especially among the partisans of Prince Dominik Zaslavski whom they both hated above all. They entered into disputes only with the most desperate ruffians whose reputation was well-known and could not be doubted, and at once began to seek a quarrel.

"You, sir, seek a quarrel," said Pan Michael to Zagloba, "and then I will take it up." Zagloba who was not to be beaten in a war of words, and who in single fight with a

brother nobleman was no coward, did not always agree to playing second fiddle, especially in disputes with the Zaslavskis; but, when it was a question of fighting with any Lenchytsans, he halted; and, even if the other man had drawn his sword, Zagloba would say: "My good sir, I should have no conscience if I were to expose you to an inevitable death by fighting with you. Perhaps you had better try with my little son and pupil, but I do not know if you will fare any better with him." After this speech Volodiyovski would come to the front, with his pointed little moustache twirling upwards, his pug nose, and a stupid expression on his face; and, whether his substitution was accepted or not, he would intervene as he really was a master above all masters began at once to fight and usually laid his opponent low, after a few rounds. They both, therefore, sought such entertainment. Their fame continued to increase among the restless spirits of the nobility; especially Zagloba's fame, for they said, "if that is his pupil, what must the master be." But it was a long time before Volodiyovski could find Pan Kharlamp—he even thought that he had been sent back to Lithuania on some business.

Six weeks had elapsed, during which time public affairs had made a great advance. The struggle between the two candidates, and brothers, the exertions of their adherents, the violence and excitement of the partisans, had all pretty nearly passed from remembrance. It was already known to all that Yan Casimir would be elected, for Charles had withdrawn and left the field clear for his brother. It seemed strange that Khmyelnitski's voice should be heard and that it should have any weight.

It was thought that he would bow to the majesty of the king, especially such a king; one who had been chosen according to his wishes. These surmises for the most part were verified by the event. This turn of the wheel of fate was a heavy blow to Vishnyovyetski who, like Cato of olden times, had never ceased to advise the destruction of this Zaporojian Carthage. Now, under these circumstances, the only step to take was that of negotiation. The prince saw, indeed, that these negotiations would result in nothing or, in a short time, would be brought to nothing by the force of circumstances. And he saw nothing but war in the future and was filled with anxiety at the thought of whither this war would lead. After the conclusion of these negotiations, Khmyel-

nitski would become stronger and the Commonwealth weaker. And who would then venture to lead their forces against such a celebrated leader as Khmyelnitski? Would not new defeats new misfortunes come to pass, which would exhaust their resources to the uttermost? For the prince did not deceive himself. He knew, that he, the most dreaded of Prince Charles' adherents, would not receive the chief command. It was true that Prince Casimir had promised his brother that he would honor his adherents as he did his own, for he had a noble soul. But Casimir sided with the political party of the chancellor, consequently, another would obtain the baton, not he. Woe to the Commonwealth, however, if this one should not be a more experienced leader than Khmyelnitski. A two-fold sorrow filled the soul of Prince Yeremy—anxiety about the future of the mother-country and that indescribable feeling that takes possession of a man who sees that his services are not valued; that he does not obtain justice, and that others are allowed to supplant him. Yeremy would not have been a Vishnyovyetski if he had not been haughty. He felt in himself the power to wield the baton and he had deserved it; consequently he suffered a two-fold disappointment.

It was said even among the officers that the prince would not wait for the end of the election, but would leave Warsaw; but that was not true—the prince not only did not leave, but even went to Nyeporents to see Prince Casimir, by whom he was received most graciously; and, after a long audience, returned to the town, because military affairs demanded his presence. It was a question of the transport of provisions to the soldiers, which the prince had earnestly urged; besides this, new regiments, dragoons and infantry, had to be formed at Prince Charles' expense. The first were to be sent at once to Russia, the others were to be trained. For this purpose, Yeremy sent, in all directions, officers who were experienced in the organization of troops, in order to bring those regiments and squadrons into the desired condition. Kushel and Vyershul were also sent out, and, at last, it came to Volodiyovski's turn.

He was summoned one day before the prince who gave him the following orders:

"You are to go to Zaborova by way of Babits and Lipki, where horses intended for the regiment are waiting. Look them over and make your selection and pay Pan Tshakovski, and then bring them home for the soldiers. You can draw

the money here in Warsaw on my account from the paymaster."

Volodiyovski lost no time in setting to work, drew the money and, that very day, rode off with Zagloba to Zaborova, accompanied by ten men and a wagon to convey the money. They rode slowly, for the whole region this side of Warsaw was swarming with noblemen, servants, wagons and horses. Every hamlet was so crowded on the road to Babits that every cabin was filled with guests. One might easily meet with an accident among this crowd of men of the most varied dispositions; and the two friends, in spite of their polite behavior, did not escape some adventure. When they reached Babits they noticed, outside the inn, several noblemen who were just mounting their horses in order to ride away. Both parties were just about to pass each other with a friendly salute when suddenly, one of the riders spied Pan Michael and, without saying a word, sprang towards him on horseback.

"So here you are, little brother," he cried, "you hid yourself, but I have found you. You will not escape me. Hey, gentlemen," to his comrades, "wait a little; I have something to say to this little officer and would like you to hear my words."

Volodiyovski smiled, for he had recognized Kharlamp.

"God is my witness, I did not hide myself," he said, "I was looking for you, myself, to see if you were still cherishing your hatred against me, but we could not find each other."

"Pan Michael," whispered Zagloba, "you are under orders."

"I remember!" growled Volodiyovski.

"Stand forth!" shouted Kharlamp. "Gentlemen, I promised this youth, this beardless boy, that I would cut off his ears, and I will cut them off, as sure as my name is Kharlamp. Yes, Kharlamp! Be witnesses, gentlemen; and you, youngster, prepare to fight!"

"I must not, as I love God! I must not; allow me a few days time."

"What? Cant! Coward! You are afraid! If you do not stand up on the instant, I will thrash you so that you will call on your grandmother and grandfather. Oh, you gad-fly, you poisonous insect, you can get in a man's road and insult him and sting him with your tongue; but, when it comes to a duel, you are not to be found."

Here Zagloba intervened:

"It seems to me, gentlemen, that you are dodging the ques-

tion," he said to Kharlamp. "Look out that this gad-fly does not really sting you; for, then, no plaster will help you. Fie! To the Devil! Do you not see that this officer is under orders. Look at this wagon full of gold, which we are taking to the regiment, and understand, that he is guarding a treasure, and that you dare not injure his person, dare not touch him. Whoever cannot understand that, must be a fool and no soldier. We are in the service of the Voyevoda of Russia and we don't fight with such fellows, to-day it cannot be. Delayed does not mean run away."

"That is really the case, if they are travelling with money; they dare not," said one of Kharlamp's companions.

"What do I care for their money?" screamed the furious Kharlamp. "Let him stand forth or I will thrash him."

"I will not fight to-day; but, on the word of a knight," said Pan Michael, "I will meet you in three or four days, wherever you wish, as soon as my duties are at an end. And if you, gentlemen, are not satisfied with this promise, I will give the order to fire on you; for I shall believe that I am not dealing with noblemen—not even with soldiers, but with bandits. Choose, therefore, by all the devils; for I have no time to stand here!"

At Volodiyovski's last words, the escort of dragoons at once aimed their muskets at the assailants; and this movement, together with the decided words of Pan Michael, made an evident impression upon Pan Kharlamp's comrades.

"Give in," they said to him, "you are a soldier yourself and know what duty means, and it is certain that you will get satisfaction; for this is a bold fellow like all the men of the Russian companies. Calm yourself, we beg you."

Pan Kharlamp fumed for a few moments longer and, then, he noticed that he should either make his comrades angry, or force them into an unequal fight with the dragoons, so he turned to Volodiyovski and said:

"Promise me that you will meet me?"

"I will look for you myself, if for no other reason, than because you have twice demanded it. In four days, I shall be ready for you. This is Wednesday—let it be Saturday afternoon at two o'clock. Choose the spot."

"There are too many people in Babits," said Kharlamp. "There might be some unpleasantness. Let us meet here, near Lipki, for it is quieter and nearer for me, for my quarters are in Babits."

"And will you gentlemen appear in full force?" said Zagloba, the careful.

"Oh, that is unnecessary," said Kharlamp, "I will bring my two relations, Pans Syelitski. You, sir, will also appear without your dragoons?"

"It may be the custom with you to ride to a duel with a military escort," said Pan Michael. "With us it is not usual."

"Well, then, in four days, on Saturday in Lipki, near the inn. And now, God be with us!" said Kharlamp.

"God be with us," answered Volodiyovski and Zagloba.

The adversaries parted peacefully. Pan Michael was pleased at the idea of this approaching pastime and promised himself that he would take Kharlamp's moustache, after cutting it off, as a present to Longin. They rode at a fair speed to Zaborona, where they found Prince Casimir, who had come here for the hunting. But Pan Michael only saw his future king at a distance, for he was in a hurry. In two days he had finished his affairs, chosen the horses and, having paid Pan Tshakovski for them, returned to Warsaw and finished his journey by going to Lipki, for the duel, accompanied by Zagloba and Pan Kushel, whom he had invited to be his seconds.

They arrived in good time, a full hour before the event was to come off. When they reached the inn, which was kept by a Jew, they stepped inside to wet their throats with a little mead and converse over the glasses as they drank.

"Scab, is the landlord at home?" asked Zagloba of the innkeeper.

"The master is in the town."

"And are there many noblemen here in Lipki?"

"No, the place is almost empty. I have only one gentleman here. He is sitting in the parlor; a rich man with servants and horses."

"Why did he not go to the castle?"

"Probably he does not know our Lord. Besides, the castle has been closed for a month."

"Perhaps it is Kharlamp," said Zagloba.

"No," said Volodiyovski.

"But, Pan Michael, it seems to me that it is."

"What now?"

"I am going to see who it is. Jew, has the gentleman been here long?"

"He only arrived to-day. He has not been here quite two hours."

"And do you not know where he comes from?"

"I do not know, but it must be from a long distance, for his horses are very tired. The men say from the other side of the Vistula."

"Why did he come to Lipki?"

"Who can tell?"

"I will see about it," repeated Zagloba, "perhaps it is a friend, an acquaintance."

And approaching the closed door of the parlor, he knocked with his fist and asked:

"May I come in, sir?"

"Who is there?" cried a voice from within.

"A friend," said Zagloba, opening the door. "Pardon, sir, perhaps I am disturbing you?" he added, sticking his head into the room.

Suddenly, he drew back, slammed the door as if he seen death. On his face was depicted horror, mingled with utter astonishment and, with his mouth open, he looked in bewilderment at Volodiyovski and Kushel.

"What is the matter?" asked Volodiyovski.

"By Jesus' wounds, keep still!" said Zagloba. "Yonder! . . . Bohun!"

"Who? What happened to you?"

"In there—Bohun!"

Both officers sprang to their feet.

"Have you lost your senses? Think, again, who is it?"

"Bohun! Bohun!"

"It is not possible."

"As true as I live! As true as I stand before you! I swear by God and all the saints!"

"Why are you so frightened," said Volodiyovski. "If he is there, God has given him into our hands. Calm yourself! Are you quite certain it is he?"

"As true as I am speaking. I saw him. He is dressing himself."

"And did he see you?"

"I do not know. I think not."

Volodiyovski's eyes flashed like live coals.

"Jew," he cried softly, waving his hand furiously, "come here. Does a second door lead into that room."

"No, only the one into this room."

"Kushel, go to the window," whispered Pan Michael. "Oh, now he will not escape us again."

Kushel without saying a word hurried out of the room.

"Come to your senses," said Volodiyovski. "The sword does not hang over your neck, but over ours. What can he do to you? Nothing!"

"I simply cannot recover from my astonishment," answered Zagloba, and thought to himself, "It is true; why should I fear? Pan Michael is with me, let Bohun be afraid."

And, assuming a fierce look, he grasped the hilt of his sword.

"Pan Michael, he cannot escape us again!"

"I wonder if it is really he. I can hardly believe it. What could he be doing here?"

"Khmyelnitski has sent him out as a spy; that is certain. We will catch him and give him his choice; either he must give up the princess, or we will threaten to hand him over to justice."

"If he would only give up the princess, devil take him!"

"Pshaw! But are there not too few of us. We two, and Kushel, the third. He will defend himself like mad and, especially, as he has some attendants with him."

Kharlamp will come with two men; then we shall be six, more than enough."

At this moment, the door opened and Bohun stepped into the room.

He evidently had not seen Zagloba looking in at the door; for, at sight of him, he started, his face became crimson and his hand flew like lightning to the hilt of his sword;—but it was the work of a moment; the glow faded out of his face and he became paler than usual. Zagloba looked at him and said nothing. The ataman also stood in silence. One could have heard the wings of a fly in the room. And these two men, whose fate was so strangely interwoven, acted at this moment as if they did not know each other.

They stood thus for some moments. To Pan Michael, it seemed an eternity.

"Jew," said Bohun, suddenly, "is it far from here to Zaborova?"

"No, it is not far," answered the Jew. "Is your lordship going to set out at once?"

"I am," said Bohun, putting his foot on the step which separated his room from the inn parlor.

"With your permission," exclaimed Zagloba.

The chieftain stood, as if rooted to the spot; and, turning to Zagloba, fixed his black, dreadful eyes on him:

"What do you wish?" he asked curtly.

"Why, it seems to me that we have met somewhere? Did we not see each other at that wedding at the farm in Russia?"

"We did," said the chieftain proudly, placing his hand again on the hilt of his sword.

"How is your health?" asked Zagloba, "for you rode away so hastily from the house that day that I did not even have time to take leave of you."

"And you were sorry?"

"Certainly, I was sorry. We would have had a little dance. The company had become more numerous." Here, Zagloba pointed to Volodiyovski. "This cavalier had just arrived and wanted to make your acquaintance."

"Enough of this!" cried Pan Michael, suddenly springing forward. "Traitor, I arrest you!"

"And, by what right?" asked the ataman, raising his head proudly.

"Because you are a rebel, an enemy of the Commonwealth, and have come hither as a spy."

"And who the devil are you?"

"Oh, I do not need to introduce myself; but you will not escape me."

"We shall see," said Bohun. "I would not hesitate to tell you who I am, sir, if you were to call me out with swords, like a soldier; but as you threaten me with arrest, so let it be. See here, is a letter that I am bringing from the Hetman of the Zaporojians to Prince Casimir; and, as I did not find him in Nyeporenta, I am travelling to Zaporova to see him. How is that? Will you arrest me now?"

Then Bohun looked proudly and disdainfully at Volodiyovski, and Pan Michael looked as embarrassed as a boarhound whose prey is about to escape. He knew not what to do and turned his questioning glance on Zagloba. For a moment, there was a deep silence.

"Ah!" said Zagloba, "that will not help you. As you are an ambassador we dare not arrest you; but you dare not meet this cavalier with your sword, for you fled before him once and the earth fairly groaned."

Bohun's face became purple, for now he recognized Volodiyovski. Shame and wounded pride overcame the fearless warrior; the remembrance of that fight burned like fire. It was the one indelible stain on his soldier's honor, which he prized more than his life; more than anything else.

And the merciless Zagloba continued in a cold blooded manner.

"Your trousers were flapping, and this cavalier took pity on you and gave you your life. Fie! Pan warrior; you have a woman's face, but also a woman's heart. You were courageous enough in presence of the old princess, and the boy princes, but before a knight you play a different tune. Carrying letters, kidnapping girls, that is your business; but not making war. As true as I love God, with my own eyes, I saw your trousers flapping. Fie! Fie! and, even now, you speak about the sword, when you are carrying a letter. How can one fight with you when you hide yourself behind a letter? Sand in one's eyes, sand in one's eyes! Fie! Sir Cossack. Khmyelnitski is a good soldier, Kshyvonos is good, but there are many cowards among the Cossacks."

Bohun suddenly sprang forward on Zagloba, who sprang just as quickly behind Volodiyovski, so that the two young knights stood face to face.

"I did not flee from you out of fear, but in order to save my soldiers," said Bohun.

"I do not know why you fled, I only know that you did run away," said Pan Michael.

"I am ready to call you out, even this very moment."

"Do you call me out?" Volodiyovski asked, his eyes twinkling.

"You have robbed me of my soldier's honor, you have insulted me, I must have your blood!"

"Good," said Volodiyovski.

"*Volente non fit injuria.*" (If they are willing there is no harm), said Zagloba. "But who will take the letter to the prince?"

"Do not let your head ache on that account; that is my affair."

"Fight away, then, if it cannot be helped," said Zagloba. "If you, Chieftain, have luck with this cavalier, remember, I come in as second. And now, Pan Michael, come into the hall, I have something of importance to say to you."

The two friends went out, calling Kushel from the window of the parlor; and Zagloba said:

"Gentlemen, we are in a bad way; he has really a letter to the prince. If we kill him, it is a criminal offence. Think of it! The Chapter, propter securitatem loci, exercises justice within a circuit of two miles—and this man is as good as

an ambassador. A hard case; we shall be obliged to hide ourselves afterwards or, possibly, the Prince might shelter us; otherwise it might go hard with us. But, again, if we let him go free it is still worse. It is our only opportunity to free our poor girl. God evidently wishes to help her and Skshetuski—what shall we do? Let us consider, gentlemen."

"You will certainly find a means," said Kushel.

"I have brought it as far as this, that he has called us out, himself; but we need witnesses, strangers. My idea is, that we should wait for Kharlamp. I will take it upon myself to relinquish his right to come first; and, if necessary, to bear witness that we were challenged and had to defend ourselves. We must also find out particularly from Bohun where he has hidden the girl. If he should die, she would be of no use to him. Perhaps he will tell us, if we conjure him; and, if he will not tell us, it is better that he should not live. We must move carefully and with consideration. My head is bursting, sirs."

"Who will fight with him?" asked Kushel.

"Pan Michael first; then I," said Zagloba.

"And I will be the third."

"That must not be," interrupted Pan Michael. "I, alone, will fight him. If he cuts me down, that is his luck. Let him go off safe and sound."

"Oh! I told him I would," said Zagloba. "But if you are determined, gentlemen, I will give it up."

"Well, that is his own affair; if he wishes to fight you and no one else. Shall we go to him?"

"Let us go."

They entered the room and found Bohun in the parlor drinking mead. The chieftain was perfectly calm.

"Listen, sir," said Zagloba, "for we wish to talk to you on important matters. You called out this cavalier—that is all right; but you must know that, as you come as an ambassador, the law protects you, for you are among civilized people, and not among wild beasts. We cannot challenge you, but we ask you to ackuowledge, before witnesses, that you challenged us of your own free will. Several noblemen are coming here, with whom we are to fight. You must explain this all to them. We, however, will give you our word, as knights, that, if fortune favors you in your encounter with Volodiyovski, you may go free and no one will hinder you; unless you wish to try your luck with me."

"Good," said Bohun, "I will explain it to the gentlemen, and will tell my servants that they shall deliver the letter and tell Khmyelnitski, if I fall, that I, myself, gave the challenge. And, if God gives me luck in recovering my lost honor with this knight, I will then request you to draw your sword." As he said this he looked into Zagloba's eyes, which much embarrassed the nobleman, who coughed and spat on the floor and answered:

"Good, when you have tried your luck with my pupil, you will know what task lies before you. But, that is a secondary matter. There is another, more important point, with regard to which we will appeal to your conscience; for, although you are a Cossack, we wish to treat you as a knight. You have kidnapped princess Helena Kurtsevich, the betrothed of our companion in arms and our friend, and are hiding her away. Now, if we should call you out on that account it would matter not that Khmyelnitski had made you an ambassador; for this is abduction, a capital offence, which would be very soon dealt with. But, as you are going to fight and may probably be killed, consider what would happen to this poor girl, if you should fall. Do you, who love her so much, desire her shame and unhappiness? Must she be deprived of protection, be given over to shame and misfortune? Do you wish, even after your death, to be an executioner?"

Here, Zagloba's voice became unusually serious. Bohun grew pale, and said:

"What do you want me to do?"

"Tell us where she is imprisoned, so that, in case of your death, we may find her and take her back to her betrothed. God will have mercy on your soul if you will do this."

The chieftain buried his face in his hands and became absorbed in thought. The three friends noted carefully each change in that mobile countenance, which had suddenly assumed an expression of such deep sadness that one might have thought that anger, fury, or any other cruel feeling had never been reflected there, but that this man had been created only for love and tenderness. The silence lasted some time, until Zagloba's voice broke it, saying:

"But, if you have already wronged her, may God damn you; and may she, at least, find refuge in a convent." . .

Bohun raised his sad, moist eyes and said:

"If I have wronged her! See here! I do not know how you gentlemen of the nobility, you knights and cavaliers love;

but I am a Cossack. I preserved her from death and shame in Bar, and then took her into the wilds and watched her as the eye of my head. I have not touched a hair of her head, but have fallen at her feet and bowed my forehead to the ground before her, as before an image. She told me to go away—I went, and have not seen her since, for my mother, war, has kept me a prisoner."

"God will reward you for that at the last day," said Zagloba, sighing deeply. "But, is she perfectly safe there, Kshyvonos and the Tartars are there."

"Kshyvonos is encamped near Kamenets and sent me to Khmyelnitski to ask if he should go to Kudak. He has probably gone,—and where she is, there are neither Cossacks, Poles nor Tartars—she is safe there."

"Where is she then?"

"Listen, gentlemen, Poles! Let it be as you say. I will tell you where she is and will allow her to be given up to you; but, in return for this, give me your word as knights that, if God helps me, you will not look for her. Promise me this on your own account, as well as for Skshetuski, and then I will tell you."

The three friends looked at one another.

"We cannot do that," said Zagloba.

"No, by our soul, we cannot," cried Kushel and Volodiyovski.

"Indeed!" said Bohun, knitting his brows and his eyes flashing. "Why can you not do that, gentlemen?"

"Because Skshetuski is not here. Besides, you must know that no one of us will cease to search for her, even though you have buried her beneath the ground."

"This, then, is the kind of way you wish to deal with me: 'Thou, Cossack, give thy soul and we will pay thee for it with the sword!' Oh, you cannot do that! Do you think, perhaps, that my sword is not made of steel, that you can already croak over me like crows over carrion? Must it be I that fall, and not you? You demand my blood, I seek yours; we will see who has the most luck."

"Then, you will not tell us?"

"What should I say more—death and destruction to you all."

"Death and destruction to you yourself! You deserve to be cut to pieces."

"Try it! said the chieftain, suddenly rising to his feet

Kushel and Volodiyovski also sprang to their feet; threatening glances were exchanged; the angry breasts heaved more quickly; and who knows what would have happened, if Zagloba, who was looking out of the window, had not called out:

"Kharlamp is coming, with his seconds."

"In a few moments, the light-cavalry captain, with two companions, Pans Syelitski stepped into the room. After the first greeting, Zagloba took him aside and began to explain the matter to them. And he was so plausible that he persuaded them to wait, especially by assuring them that Pan Volodiyovski requested only a short delay and would be ready as soon as he should have finished with the Cossack. And, then, Pan Zagloba explained the terrible hatred that all the prince's soldiers had long cherished for Bohun, that he was an enemy of the whole Commonwealth, and one of the most dreaded rebels; and last, but not least, that he had stolen the princess, a young lady belonging to a noble house and the betrothed of a nobleman who was a model of knightly virtue.

"And as you, sirs, belong to the nobility and count yourselves among the brotherhood of companions in arms, the insult should be felt by all of us, as any injury to one is felt by the whole brotherhood. Would you suffer it that she should go unavenged?"

Pan Kharlamp demurred at first and said that if this was the case it was fitting that they should fight Bohun on the spot. "And Pan Volodiyovski, as previously arranged, can meet me."

Zagloba had to explain to him why this could not be and that it was not knightly for so many to attack one man. Fortunately the two Pans Syelitski agreed with him, as they were both steady, sensible men; and at length the obstinate Lithuanian let himself be persuaded and agreed to delay.

During this time, Bohun had gone to his men and had returned with Sergeant Elyashenka. He told him that he had challenged two noblemen to a duel, which he repeated aloud in presence of Kharlamp and the two Syelitskis.

"But we wish to say," said Pan Volodiyovski, "that if you are the victor it will depend on yourself whether you fight with Pan Zagloba; on no account shall one of the others challenge you. You shall also not be attacked by this crowd of men, but may go away, whither you will—on our word as knights. And I beg you, gentlemen, who have just arrived, to make the same promise on your part."

"We promise!" said Kharlamp and the two Syelitskis, solemnly.

Bohun now handed Khmyelnitski's letter to the prince to Elyashenka and said:

"Give this writing to the Crown Prince and, if I die, tell him and Khmyelnitski that it was my own fault and that I was not killed by traitors."

Zagloba, who was observing everything, remarked that Elyashenka's earnest face betrayed not the slightest uneasiness—one saw that he had perfect confidence in his ataman's skill.

Meanwhile, Bohun, turning proudly to the noblemen, said:

"Well, who is to die and who is to live? Let us go."

"It is time, it is time," they all said, tucking their coats into their belts, and carrying their swords under their arms.

They went out of the inn and towards the river which flowed between thickets of bramble, wild-roses, flags, and young pine trees.

October had scattered the leaves but the bushes grew so closely that they extended like a gray veil across the desert prairie, far away to the forests. The day was cloudy, but there was that peculiar mixture of sadness and cheerfulness which is seen only in the beauty of an Autumn day. The sun tinged with gold the branches of the trees and lighted up the yellow sand-hills which stretched along the right bank of the stream. The duellers and their seconds went toward these sand-hills.

"We will stop here," said Zagloba.

"Agreed," they all answered.

Zagloba's uneasiness increased and, at last, he approached Volodiyovski and whispered.

"Pan Michael . . . . "

"What is it?"

"For God's sake, Pan Michael, do your best! Skshetuski's fate lies in your hands, the freedom of the princess, your own life and mine; for, may God prevent it, but if you should be unlucky, I know of nothing that will save me from this murderer."

"Why did you call him out then?"

"The word is spoken. . . . I depended upon you Pan Michael; for I am getting old, my breath is short and I am clumsy; and this rascal can bound like a cricket. He is a rascally hound, Pan Michael."

"I will do my best," said the little knight.

"May God be with you! Do not lose your presence of mind!"

"Eh, why should I?"

At this moment, one of the Pan Syelitskis approached.

"Your Cossack is a queer fellow," he whispered, "he acts as if he were our equal or even better than we are. He has a sense of chivalry; his mother must have looked at a nobleman."

"Eh!" said Zagloba, "more probably a nobleman looked at his mother."

"That is what I think," said Volodiyovski.

"Let us take position!" said Bohun suddenly, "stop here!"

"Let us take position! Let us take position!"

They took position; the nobles in a semicircle and Volodiyovski and Bohun opposite one another.

Volodiyovski, with an air of experience in such matters which belied his youth, tried the ground with his foot to see if it was hard enough; then, he looked about him to take in all the inequalities of the ground, and it was evident that he took the matter seriously. He had to settle with a knight, the most celebrated in the Ukraine, in whose honor popular songs were sung, and whose name was known to the extremest limits of Russia, even to the Crimea. Pan Michael, a simple lieutenant of dragoons, counted a great deal on this duel, as he would either meet with a glorious death or an equally glorious victory. He, therefore, omitted nothing that might render him worthy of such an opponent. His face consequently became so earnest that Zagloba, when he noticed it, was fairly frightened.

"He is losing courage," he thought. "It is all up with him, as it is with me!"

Volodiyovski, after investigating the ground thoroughly, unbuttoned his coat.

"It is cool," he said, "but we shall be warm enough soon."

Bohun followed his example. They both took off their coats and stood in their shirt sleeves, with the right sleeve turned back. But how small little Pan Michael looked beside the tall, powerful ataman; one could hardly see him. His seconds looked uneasily at the Cossack's broad chest and powerful muscles which appeared under the turned back sleeve, looking like knotted cords. It was as though a little bantam should undertake to fight with an enormous hawk of the steppes. Bohun's nostrils were distended as if they smelt

IN THE NAME OF GOD, BEGIN!

blood; his face appeared to be drawn up, so that the black locks over his forehead almost reached his eyebrows; his sword twitched in his hand; the fierce eyes seemed to pierce through his opponent; he awaited the signal.

And Volodiyovski held up his bare sword to the light once more, tugged at his yellow mustache and took his position.

"It will be a regular butchery" growled Kharlamp to Syelitski.

Then Zagloba's voice said, rather unsteadily:

"In the name of God, begin!"

CHAPTER XII.

The swords swished through the air and blade clashed blade. They soon changed their ground, for Bohun attacked so furiously that Pan Volodiyovski was obliged to spring back a few steps, and his seconds did the same. Bohun's strokes fell like lightning and the excited beholders could not follow them with their eyes. It seemed to them as though Pan Mishael was completely surrounded and covered with sword thrusts and that God alone could save him from this attack. There was continuous swishing of swords, which fairly disturbed the air as though a wind were blowing in their faces. The fury of the chieftain increased; he was possessed with the madness of battle, and drove Volodiyovski before him like a hurricane. The little knight continued to retreat and to defend himself. His outstretched right arm hardly moved, the wrist alone describing small but rapid semicircles quick as thought, as he warded Bohun's wild strokes. He caught each stroke, parried it, again guarded, and retreated at the same time, fixing his eyes on those of the Cossack, and remaining perfectly calm in the midst of the serpentine-lightning strokes; only on his cheeks were two red spots.

Zagloba shut his eyes and listened to stroke upon stroke, clash upon clash.

"He is still defending himself," he thought.

"He is still defending himself," whispered the two Syelitskis and Kharlamp.

"He is already driven to the bank," added Kushel softly.

Zagloba opened his eyes again and looked up.

Volodiyovski's back was against the bank, but he did not appear to be wounded and his face only grew redder and a few drops of sweat stood out on his forehead.

Zagloba's heart beat with hope.

"Pan Michael is a fighter of fighters," he thought, "and the other man will finally become exhausted."

Bohun's face grew pale, sweat covered his forehead; but his opponent's resistance only increased his rage, his white teeth

gleamed beneath his moustache and a growl of anger escaped him.

Volodiyovski never took his eye off him and continued to guard.

Suddenly, feeling the bank beside him, he pulled himself together; his seconds thought he was about to fall; but he bent forward, crouched, and threw himself like a stone at the breast of the Cossack.

"He is attacking," cried Zagloba.

"He is attacking," repeated the others.

It was really the case. Now, the chieftain retreated and the little knight, who had found out the whole strength of his opponent, pressed on him with so much energy that his seconds gasped for breath. He was evidently becoming excited—the little eyes flashed fire. Again he crouched and again sprang forward, changing his position at every moment, describing circles around the chieftain and forcing him to turn round constantly.

"An adept! an adept!" cried Zagloba.

"You are lost!" said Bohun, suddenly.

"You are lost!" answered Volodiyovski like an echo.

Here the Cossack used a trick, which was only known to the most practised fighters. He suddenly changed his sword from the right to the left hand and made such a powerful stroke that Pan Michael fell to the earth as though struck by lightning.

"Jesus Maria!" cried Zagloba.

But Pan Michael had fallen intentionally, and Bohun's sword cut through the empty air. The little knight at once sprang up like a wild-cat, and slashed with almost the whole length of his sword across the breast of the Cossack.

Bohun tottered, took a step forward, and with an effort gave a last blow, which Pan Volodiyovski parried with ease. Twice, he struck his opponent's bowed head, and the sword dropped from Bohun's powerless hands and the warrior fell on his face in the sand, which presently became a wide pool of blood beneath him.

Elyashenka who had been present at the fight, threw himself upon the body of the ataman.

The seconds were unable to speak a word for some time, and Pan Michael also was silent: he leaned both hands on his sword and panted heavily.

Zagloba was the first to break the silence.

"Pan Michael, come to my arms!" he said, in an unsteady voice.

They all surrounded him.

"You are a fighter of the first rank. May the balls strike you!" said Pan Syelitski.

"I see you are a tough knot," said Kharlamp, "I will stand up with you, so that no one may say I was afraid; but if you should punish me like that I should still say, 'I congratulate you, I congratulate you.' "

"Let that go, gentlemen, for, to tell the truth, you really have no good reason to fight," said Zagloba.

"That will not do, for it is a question of my reputation," said the light-cavalryman, "for which I would willingly sacrifice my head."

"I care nothing about your head, but let us give it up," said Volodiyovski, "for I am really not standing in your way as you think; there is another in the case who is more fortunate than I."

"How so?"

"On the word of a knight!"

"Make it up," cried the Syelitskis and Kushel.

"Let it be so!" said Kharlamp, holding out his arms.

Volodiyovski threw himself into the outstretched arms and they kissed one another till the banks re-echoed, and Kharlamp remarked:

"I had no idea that you could give that giant such a beating! And yet he understood how to wield a sword?"

"I never would have believed him to be such a swordsman, where can he have learned it?"

Here the general attention was directed to the prostrate form of the Cossack chieftain. Elyashenka had turned his master over so that his face was upturned; and he looked with tears for any sign of life. Bohun's face was not recognizable for it was covered with blood, which flowed from the wounds in the head and congealed in the cool air; the shirt on his breast was also soaked with blood, but he still gave signs of life. He was evidently in the death convulsion, his feet twitched and his hands were clenched and dug in the sand. Zagloba looked at him and motioned with his hand.

"He has had enough," he said, "he is taking leave of the world."

"Ah!" said one of the Syelitskis, looking at the body, "he is quite dead."

"Bah! he is almost hacked through and through."

"He was not a bad knight," murmured Volodiyovski, shaking his head.

"I have something to say about that," added Zagloba.

During this time Elyashenka was trying to lift the unfortunate ataman, to carry him away; but, as he was no longer young and strong, and Bohun was almost a giant, he was unable to do it. It was some furlongs to the inn and Bohun might expire at any moment. When the sergeant saw this, he turned to the gentlemen.

"Gentlemen!" he cried, folding his hands, "help me, for God and the Holy Virgin's sake; do not let him die here like a dog. An old man like me cannot manage it alone, and there is no one near!"

The gentlemen looked at one another, their hatred for Bohun had vanished from all hearts.

"True; it is not fitting that we should leave him here like a dog," murmured Zagloba, "as we fought a duel with him, we can no longer consider him a peasant, but as a soldier who needs assistance. Who will help me to carry him, gentleemen?"

"I," said Volodiyovski.

"Carry him on my cloak," added Kharlamp.

In a few minutes Bohun was placed on the cloak at either end of which was Zagloba, Volodiyovski, Kishel and Elyaskenka and the procession moved with slow steps towards the inn, accompanied by Kharlamp and the two Syelitskis.

"He has a strong hold on life," said Zagloba, he is still moving. Good God! if anyone had told me that I should be his nurse and carry him as I am doing now, I would have laughed. What a fool I am! I have a very tender heart, I know, but it cannot be helped. I will bind up his wounds once again. I hope that we shall never meet again in this world and I want him to have a pleasant remembrance of me in the other."

"Do you really think, then, that he will not recover?" asked Kharlamp.

"He, recover! I would not give an old rag for his life. It was so ordained and can't be changed. Even if he had escaped from Volodiyovski's hands, he would not have got away from me. But I am glad it happened as it has, for I am already looked upon as a slayer without mercy. What can I do if anyone puts himself in my way? I had to pay Pan

Dunchevski five hundred gold zlatos indemnity, and you all know that the Russian property does not bring in any income at present."

"That is true. They have completely plundered you over there," said Kharlamp.

"Ugh! This Cossack is heavy," said Zagloba. "I am quite out of breath. Plundered! I should say they had plundered. But I hope that the Diet will make some provision for us. If it does not, we shall all starve to death. . . How heavy he is, how heavy! Look, his wounds are beginning to bleed again. Pan Kharlamp run to the inn and tell the Jew to knead up some bread and cobwebs. It is true it will not be of much use to a dead man, but it is our Christian duty to stanch the wounds; he will die more easily. Lively! Pan Kharlamp."

Pan Kharlamp ran ahead, and, as soon as they had finally brought Bohun into the room of the inn, Zagloba set to work to bandage him with great skill and deftness. He stanched the blood, closed the wounds, and then, turning to Elyashenka, said:

"You, old man, are no longer needed here. Ride speedily to Zaborova and entreat that they will allow you to see the Leader at once. Give him the letter and relate all that you witnessed, just as you saw it. If you lie, I shall find it out, for I am the confidant of the illustrious prince—and I will have your head chopped off. Greet Khmyelnitski from me, for he knows and loves me. We will give the ataman honorable burial; and you, attend to your business. Do not wander out of your way, for someone may kill you before you have time to find out who it is. God be with you, go, go!"

"Permit me, sir, to wait until he is perfectly cold."

"Go, I tell you!" said Zagloba, angrily. "If not, I will have you given up to the peasants in Zaborova and greet Khmyelnitski for me."

Elyashenka bowed low and went out. Zagloba, however, said to Kharlamp and the Syelitskis:

"I sent away the Cossack, he had nothing to do here; and if he should be killed, as may easily happen, they would blame us. The Zaslavskis and the chancellor's mongrels will be the first to cry out that the prince's men, contrary to God's commands, have murdered the whole Cossack embassy. But a clever head is of use in all emergencies. We will not let ourselves be pounded into grits by these fools, these barley-

porridge eaters, and you, gentlemen, give your testimony, should it be necessary, and tell how everything happened; and that he, himself, called us out. I must also give orders to the bailiff here to have him buried somewhere. No one here knows who he is, and they will think he is a nobleman and bury him with honors. It is time to set out, Pan Michael, for we must bring word to the Prince Voyevoda.

The death-rattle in Bohun's throat interrupted Zagloba's speech.

"Oh, the soul is seeking its way," said the nobleman. "It is growing dark already, he will find the darkness in the other world. But, as he has not wronged our poor girl, may God grant him everlasting rest, Amen! Let us mount, Pan Michael, I forgive him everything from my whole heart, although, in truth, I got more in his way than he did in mine. But now, this is the end. Farewell, sirs, I am pleased to have met such noble knights. Do not forget to give your testimony should it be necessary."

CHAPTER XIII.

Prince Yeremy received the news of Bohun's death with indifference, especially when he learned that men who did not belong to his regiments were ready to bear witness that Volodiyovski had been challenged. If the affair had not taken place a few days before it was publicly announced that Yan Casimir had been chosen; if the struggle of the two candidates, Yeremy's opponents, with the chancellor and Prince Dominik at their head, had still been going on, they would have made of this circumstance a weapon against him, in spite of all witnesses and all testimony. But, after Charles' withdrawal, men's minds were otherwise engaged, and probably the whole event would be completely forgotten.

Khmyelnitski might possibly make use of it to show that he had again suffered an injustice, but the prince expected rightly that the king's son, in answering the letter, would also point out the manner in which his ambassador had come to his death, and Khmyelnitski would not dare question the royal word.

The prince was particularly anxious that his soldiers should not be brought into any political difficulty. He rejoiced on Skshetuski's account that this had happened, for the recovery of the young Princess Kurtsevich was now much more possible and practicable. She might be found, freed or rescued, and, no matter at what cost, the prince would spare nothing, not even the greatest cost to release the sorrow of his favorite knight, and to give him back his happiness.

Volodiyovski had gone to the prince in fear and trembling, for, though in general he was no coward, he feared the prince's frown as he feared fire. How great then was his astonishment and joy, when, after receiving his message and reflecting for a few moments, the prince drew a costly ring from his finger and said:

"I esteem your self-restraint, gentlemen, for if you had been the first to attack him, great and serious trouble might have resulted in the assembly; and if the princess is found,

Skshetuski will owe you everlasting gratitude. I hear that you, Volodiyovski, cannot keep your sword in its sheath as some cannot restrain their tongue, and you deserve a penalty on that account; but, as you acted in the interests of your friends and maintained the reputation of our regiments in a duel with such a well-known warrior, take this ring in remembrance of the day. I knew that you were a good soldier and swordsman, but I hear that you are a master of masters."

"He!" cried Zagloba, "he would cut off the devil's horns in the third round. If your Highness should ever wish to cut off my head, may I entreat that no other than he should be given the task, for I know my transit to the other world would be rapid. He cut Bohun twice across the breast and then gave him two strokes on the brain-box."

The prince loved knightly deeds and good soldiers so he smiled pleasantly and asked: "Have you ever found anyone who equals you with the sword?"

"Once, Skshetuski wounded me slightly, but I also wounded him; at the time your Highness put us in the tower. Among others, Pan Podbipyenta would be a match for me, for he has superhuman strength,—and even perhaps Kushel, if he had better eyes."

"Do not believe him your Highness," said Zagloba, "no one can withstand him."

"Did Bohun defend himself long?"

"I had hard work with him," said Pan Michael, "he knew how to fight with his left hand."

"Bohun told me himself," interrupted Zagloba, "that he spent whole days practising with the Kurtseviches and I saw him practising with others in Chigrin."

"Do you know what, Pan Volodiyovski," said the prince with pretended earnestness, "supposing you ride to Zamost, call out Khmyelnitski to fight with swords and, with one stroke, deliver the Commonwealth from all its sorrow and misery."

"If your Highness commands, I will go; if Khmyelnitski will only fight with me," answered Volodiyovski.

The prince replied:

"We are joking, while the world is going to ruin. But you really must ride to Zamost gentlemen; I have word from the Cossack camp that as soon as Prince Casimir's election is announced, Khmyelnitski will raise the siege and retreat to Russia. He does this either from real or pretended respect

to the king, or because his forces might be easily routed at Zamost. So you must go there and tell Skshetuski what has happened and that he must look for the princess. Tell him that he may take as many men as he needs for his expedition from our regiment under the Staroста of Valet's command; and I will grant him leave and a safe conduct, which you will take to him, for I am deeply interested in his happiness."

"Your Highness is a father to all of us," said Volodiyovski, "and we will serve you faithfully to the end of our days."

"I do not know if my following may not diminish before long," said the prince, "if all my possessions in the Dnieper land are lost—but as long as they last, what is mine is yours."

"Oh," cried Pan Michael, "our poor property will always be your Highness's property."

"And take mine with the rest," said Zagloba.

"I do not need it, as yet," said the prince graciously, "besides, I hope that even if I should lose everything the Commonwealth will take care of my children."

The prince spoke these words in a moment of clairvoyance of what might come to pass. Some ten years later, the Commonwealth gave his only son the best that it had to offer—the crown; but at the present time the prince's gigantic fortune had decreased considerably.

"Well, we got out of it finely," said Zagloba, after he and Volodiyovski had left the prince. "Pan Michael, you are sure of promotion. Let me see the ring! By God! it is worth a hundred zlotas (florins); the stone is very beautiful. Let us ask an Armenian in the bazaar about it to-morrow. One could carouse for its value in eating and drinking and other delights; what do you say, Pan Michael? That is a soldier's maxim, 'Live to-day, perish to-morrow,' and the meaning is that it does not pay to think of to-morrow. Man's life is short, very short, Pan Michael. The most important thing is, however, that from now on the prince has taken you to his heart. He would have given ten times as much to have made Skshetuski a present of Bohun; and you have done it. Believe me, you are on the high road to promotion. Has not the prince given villages in life-tenure to his knights, or even given them out and out? A ring is of no value; he will certainly give you something else, and probably marry you at last to one of his relations."

Pan Michael almost jumped.

"How do you know that. . . "

"That what?"

"I only meant what notion have you got in your head? How could such a thing come to pass?"

"Does not everything come to pass? Are you not a noble, and are not all nobles equal? Have not all the magnates distant cousins among the nobility, and do they not give them in marriage to their favorite attendants? Has not the Suffchynski in Siench a distant relation of the Vishnyovyetski for a wife. They are all brothers Pan Michael, all brothers, even if one serves another, for we all descended from Japhet; and the whole distinction in rank and riches depends on whether you can obtain them or not. It is said that, in other places, there are considerable differences in rank among the nobility; but that is a mangy nobility. I understand differences between dogs, as for instance; setters, greyhounds and bloodhounds, by their voice in hunting; but, consider, Pan Michael, with the nobility it is not so, or we should all be hounds and not nobles, which disgrace to this noble condition our good Lord does not permit."

"You are right, sir," said Volodiyovski, "but the Vishnyovyetski are almost of royal blood."

"And you, Pan Michael, might not you be chosen for king? I should be the first to insist on nominating you; like Pan Zygmunt Skarshevski who swears that he would elect himself if he were not a dicer. Everything with us thank God is by free suffrages; and our poverty, alone, not our birth, stands in our way."

"That's just what it is," sighed Pan Michael.

"What is to be done! They have robbed us completely and we shall be completely ruined, if the Diet does not give us some help; utterly ruined. Is it any wonder that a man who is naturally abstemious should take to drinking under such circumstances. Come Pan Michael, let us drink a glass of beer, perhaps that may comfort us somewhat."

During this conversation, they had reached the old town and stepped into a wine room before which stood several boys holding the furs and cloaks of their masters, who were drinking inside. They sat down at a table, ordered a bottle, and considered what was best to do, now that Bohun was dead.

"If it is true that Khmyelnitski is raising the siege of Zamost and there will be peace, the princess is ours," said Zagloba.

"We must go as soon as possible to Skshetuski. We will not leave him again until we have found the princess."

"We will go together, but now it is impossible to reach Zamost."

"That makes no difference, if God only helps us later."

Zagloba emptied his glass.

"He will help us, He will help us," he said, "listen Pan Michael to what I tell you."

"What is it?"

"Bohun is dead."

Volodiyovski looked up in astonishment.

"Pshaw, who knows that better than I do?"

"You deserve all credit, Pan Michael; you know it and I know it. I watched you fighting, I see you now—and, nevertheless, I have to repeat it to myself, for sometimes it seems as if it were only a dream. What an anxiety is removed, what a knot your sword has cut! May the balls strike you! by God! it is incredible; no, I cannot stand it any longer; let me embrace you once more, little Michael. Believe me, when I first met you, I thought to myself, 'H'm, a little creature'—and see what a fine creature it is that has beaten Bohun. Bohun lives no longer, no, not a trace, no ashes left, killed dead, forever and ever, amen!"

Here, Zagloba put his arms around Volodiyovski and kissed him, and Pan Michael was moved to tears, as though he were mourning Bohun. Finally, he managed to free himself from Zagloba's arms and said:

"We did not see him die and he is a tough fellow—supposing he should get well!"

"For God's sake, what do you mean?" said Zagloba. "I am ready to ride to-morrow to Lipki to order him the most splendid funeral, if he is only dead."

"And what good would that do? You would not kill a wounded man! It is often so with sword wounds; if a man does not give up the ghost at once, he generally creeps out of it somehow. The sword is not like a bullet."

"No, it is impossible, the death-rattle was beginning as we rode away. Oh, no, it is impossible, his breast was cut open like the door of a shed, let him rest, you cut him as if he were a hare. We must go to Skshetuski as soon as possible to help him and comfort him, for he is worrying himself to death."

"Or he has gone into a monastery, as he told me himself."

"No wonder! I should do the same thing in his place. I know no cavalier who is more worthy than he, but none who is more unhappy. Oh, God is proving him severely, very severely."

"Stop there, sir," said Volodiyovski, who was a little drunk, "for I cannot keep from tears."

"And how can I then," answered Zagloba, "such an honorable knight, such a soldier. . . and then the girl! you do not know her; . . . she is a dear little worm."

Here Zagloba began to bellow in a deep bass, for he loved the little princess very dearly, and Pan Michael accompanied him in a somewhat higher key, and they drank wine mixed with tears, and their heads sank on their breasts; they sat for some time in gloomy silence. At length, Zagloba brought his fist down on the table:

"Pan Michael, why do we weep, Bohun is slain."

"Ah, that is true," said Volodiyovski.

"We ought rather to rejoice. What fools we are not to go and look for her at once."

"Let us start at once," said Volodiyovski, standing up.

"Let us drink," said Zagloba, "God grant that we may yet hold her children over the font; and all that because we have killed Bohun."

"It serves him right!" ended Pan Michael, who did not remark that Zagloba was already sharing the fame of Bohun's death.

CHAPTER XIV.

At length the Te Deum Laudamus sounded in the cathedral in Warsaw and "the King was enthroned in his majesty;" the cannon thundered, the bells rang, and confidence was restored to all hearts. Now at last the time of interregum, disputes, and unrest, was over, which had been so terrible for the Commonwealth, especially as it happened at a time of general misery. Those who had trembled at the thought of the approaching dangers, now breathed freely; as the election had passed more quietly than any had dared to hope. Many believed that the unexampled civil war was now over, once for all; and that all that remained for the newly-chosen King was to sentence the guilty ones. Khmyelnitski's attitude also confirmed this hope. The Cossacks who were obstinately besieging the fortress of Zamost declared, as one man, for Yan Casimir. Khmyelnitski sent by provost Hunzel Mokrski letters full of assurances of submission and fealty and by other messengers, humble entreaties for himself and the Zaporojian armed. It was also known that the King in accord with the policy of the chancellor Ossolinski wished to make important concessions to the Cossacks. As before the defeat of Pilavyets the word "war" had been in everyone's mouth, now, everyone spoke of peace. It was expected that after so much misfortune the Commonwealth would breathe freely and that all her wounds would be healed under the new regime.

Finally, Sniarovski went with a letter from the king to Khmyelnitski; and, soon after, the joyful news was spread abroad that the Cossacks had left Zamost and were going to the Ukraine, where they would quietly await the commands of the king, and a commission which should investigate the wrongs of which they complained. It seemed to all as though a seven-hued rainbow, promising peace and quiet, overarched the land after a storm.

Indeed, evil prophecies and forebodings were not wanting; but, in face of the happy reality, no great importance was

attached to them. The king travelled to Chenstohovo to thank the heavenly intercessor for his election and to place himself under her further protection, and then he went to Cracow for the coronation. The royal officials followed in his train, and Warsaw was deserted. The refugees from Russia alone remained behind, as they did not dare to return to their ruined property; or, perhaps, had none.

Prince Yeremy, as a senator of the Commonwealth was obliged to go with the king, but Volodiyovski and Zagloba at the head of a dragoon regiment, went by forced marches to Zamost in order to announce to Skshetuski the joyful news of Bohun's death; and then to set out with him to look for the princess.

Zagloba left Warsaw, not without a certain sadness; for he was as happy as a fish in the sea among this enormous crowd of noblemen, amid the noise of the election, and the uninterrupted carousing and quarreling, in company with Volodiyovski. But he was comforted by the thought that he was returning to an active life, to adventures and intrigues, which he was planning; and besides he had his own opinion of the dangers of the capital, which he explained to Volodiyovski in the following manner:

"It is true, Pan Michael, that we have done great things in Warsaw, but God preserve us from remaining there too long. I tell you, we should have become effeminate like those celebrated Carthaginians, who were completely ruined by the enervating life in Capua. And the worst of all are the women, they lead one to destruction; for, mark you, there is nothing more dangerous than a woman. I am already old and yet they try to attract me . . . "

"Eh! never mind that," interrupted Volodiyovski.

"I have often said to myself that it is time to get some sense; but I am so warm-blooded. You have more phlegm, but I am choleric. But that is a secondary matter, we are now going to begin another life. There have been times when I was unhappy without war. Our regiment is in good condition and near Zamost there are enough rioters; we can amuse ourselves with them on the way to the princess. We will then find Skshetuski and that giant, that Lithuanian crane, that hop-pole, Pan Longin, we have not seen him for a long time."

"You long to see him and, yet, when you see him, you do not give him any peace."

"Because when he speaks it is as when your horse moves his tail and he stretches out every word as a shoemaker does a piece of leather. It is all strength with him, not intelligence. When he embraces anyone, he squeezes his ribs through the skin; but, on the other hand there is not a child in the Commonwealth who could not hang him up on a hook. Is it not absurd that a man of such fortune should be so stupid?"

"Is he really so rich?"

"He! When I first met him he had a belt that was so full of money that he could not fasten it, and dragged it about with him like a sausage. You might hit it with a stick and it would not bend. He told me hims lf how many villages he possessed;[1] but who could remember all their heathenish names! He owns half a district; it is a great family among the soup-swillers, the family of the Podbipyenta."

"Are you not over-coloring it somewhat?"

"I am not; for I am repeating only what he told me himself, and he never told a lie in his life, for anyway he is too stupid to tell a lie."

"Well, then Anusia will be in the fullest sense of the word princess. But, as for his stupidity I do not agree with you at all; he is a reticent man and so sensible that no one can give better council in emergency. He is no rascal; but God has given to very few such a fluent tongue as you have, that cannot be denied. He is a great knight and the noblest of men, the best proof of it is that you yourself love him and like to see him."

"He is a scourge of God," growled Zagloba, "the only reason I want to see him is that I like to roast him about Panna Anna."

"I would not advise you to do that, for it might be dangerous. One can amuse oneself at his expense, but in this case he would lose patience."

"Let him lose it, I will cut off his ears as I did Dunchevski's."

"Let it alone, sir, I would not advise my worst enemy to try it."

"Tut, tut, tut, let me only see him."

Zagloba's wish was fulfilled sooner than he expected. When they reached Konskovoli Volodiyovski determined to

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[1] Myshykishki, Psikishki, Pigvishki, Syrutisiany, Tsiaputsiany Kaputsiany, or rather Kaputsiana—glova (cabbage-head)—Baltupie.

rest, for the horses were very tired. Who can describe the astonishment of the two friends, when, on entering the dark hall of the inn the first person they met was the nobleman, Pan Podbipyenta.

"How are you, sir, it is a long time since I saw you,' said Zagloba. "So the Cossacks in Zamost did not cut you to pieces."

Podbiyenta embraced one after the other with both arms and kissed them on the cheeks.

"Oh, it is good to see you again," he said joyously.

"Where are you going?" asked Volodiyovski.

To Warsaw, to the prince."

"The prince is not in Warsaw, he has gone to Cracow with the king, to carry the orb before him at the coronation."

"And Pan Veyher has sent me to Warsaw with a letter, and to find out where the prince's regiments are going; for, thank God, they are no longer needed in Zamost."

"You do not need to go there, for we are bringing commands."

Pan Longin was annoyed; he had wished with whole heart to see the prince, the court, and especially a certain little person at this court.

Zagloba winked meaningly at Volodiyovski.

"Well, then, I will go to Cracow," he said, after a short pause, "I received orders to deliver the letter and I will do so."

"Let us go into the room and warm ourselves with some beer," said Zagloba.

"And where are you going?" asked Longin.

"To Zamost, to Skshetuski."

"The lieutenant is not in Zamost."

"Old woman, here's a cake, where is he then?"

"Somewhere near Khorosch. He is scattering groups of peasantry. Khymelnitski retreated, but his officers are burning and plundering on the road. The Starosta of Valets has sent Pan Jacob Rogovski to scatter them."

"And Skshetuski is with him?"

"Yes, but they are going separately; for there are great differences between them, of which I will tell you later."

They had entered the room, Zagloba ordered three pots of beer to be heated, and, approaching the table at which Longin and Volodiyovski were already seated, he said:

"You do not yet know the greatest and most joyful news,

Pan Podbiyenta; the news that we, I and Pan Michael have killed Bohun."

The Lithuanian almost jumped from the bench in his astonishment.

"My own dear brothers, can that be?"

"As true as we are both alive."

"And the two of you killed him?"

"We did."

"That is news indeed! O God, God!" said the Lithuanian clapping his hands, "You say you both killed him, how could you both do it?"

"In this way. I managed by craft, to bring him to such a pass that he challenged us—do you understand? upon which Pan Michael fought him and cut him up like an Easter sucking-pig; he laid him out like a roast capon—do you understand?"

"Then you did not both fight him?"

"Now, look here;" said Zagloba, "you must have been bled and your understanding have become weakened. Do you think I could fight with a dead man, or slay one already down?"

"But you said you both fought him."

Zagloba shrugged his shoulders.

"One must have the divine patience with this man. Pan Michael, did not Bohun call us both out?"

"He did," said Volodiyovski.

"Now, do you understand?"

"Well, let it be," answered Longin. "Skshetuski looked for Bohun near Zamost, but he was not there any longer."

"How do you mean that Skshetuski looked for him?"

"I see that I must tell you everything from the beginning, just as it happened," said Longin. "We remained, as you know, in Zamost and you went to Warsaw. We did not have to wait long for the Cossacks. They came in enormous crowds from Lemburg; one could not see the end of them from the walls. But our prince has provided for Zamost so well that it can hold out for two years. We began to believe that they would not storm the fortress and were very sorry on that account; for we were all looking forward to their defeat. As there were also Tartars among them, I hoped that the merciful God would give me my three heads. . . "

"Pray for one, and that a good one," answered Zagloba.

"Ah, you are the same as ever, sir; that does not sound

well," said the Lithuanian. "Well, we thought they would not storm the town, but they were almost mad in their obstinacy of heart, and began to build machines and then to storm us. It appeared later that Khmyelnitski himself did not wish that; but Charnota, their field commander, stormed in upon him and said that he was trying to run away, like a coward and to make friends with the Poles; and then Khmyelnitski had nothing for it but to send Charnota forward. What then happened, little brothers, I cannot tell you. There was nothing to be seen but smoke and fire. At first they attacked us boldly, filled the trench, and sprang on the walls. We made it so hot for them, however, that they fled, not only from the walls, but from their own engines; then we moved out with four regiments, and pursued them and slaughtered them like cattle."

Volodiyovski rubbed his hands.

"Ah, I am sorry that I was not at that entertainment," he cried excitedly.

"I too, might have been of some use there,' said Zagloba with quiet assurance.

"And those that fought the best there were Skshetuski and Jacob Rogovski," continued the Lithuanian. "Both noble knights, but very antagonistic to each other. Rogovski, particularly, sought a quarrel with Skshetuski and would have undoubtedly called him out if Pan Veyher had not forbidden the duel under pain of death. We could not understand at first, why Pan Rogovski wanted to fight, until we discovered that he was a relation of Pan Lashch whom, you remember, the prince drove out of the camp on Skshetuski's account. This accounted for Rogovski's anger towards the prince, and towards all of us; and especially towards the lieutenant. This was the discord between them, between two men who, during the siege covered themselves with glory; and who, before that, had wished to kill each other. They were both first on the walls, first in a sally, until Khymelnitski finally got tired of attacking us and the regular siege began, not omitting any treachery which might bring about the fall of the town."

"He trusts in cunning more than anything," said Zagloba.

"A mad and, at the same time, an obscure man," added Podbipyenta. "He thought that Pan Veyher was a German —probably he knew nothing of the Voyevoda of Pomerania of the same name, for he wrote a letter with the intention of

persuading the Starosta to betray the town, as if he were a stranger and a hireling. But Pan Veyher told him in a letter what he thought of him and that he had come with his temptation to the wrong man. In order to make his dignity apparent, the starosta insisted on sending this letter by some person of importance and not by a trumpeter, and, as one was sure to be killed among such wild beasts, none of our men were anxious to go; so I undertook it and now—listen, for the best is to come."

"We are listening attentively," said the two friends.

"Well, I rode there and found the hetman drunk. He received me in a rage, especially when he had read the letter, and threatened me with his baton; and I—humbly commended my soul to God and thought to myself, 'if he touches me I will smash his head with my fist.' What was to be done, little brothers, what could I do?"

"It was noble of you to think that," said Zagloba slyly.

"But his officers sought to calm him and stepped between us," said Longin, "especially a young man, who was so bold as to seize him round the waist and pull him back, saying 'you shall not go, little father, you are drunk.' I looked more closely to see who was protecting me, astonished at his boldness and that he was so familiar with Khmyelnitski and it was—Bohun."

"Bohun" cried Volodiyovski and Zagloba.

"Bohun, himself; I recognized him, for I had seen him in Rozloga—and he recognized me. I heard him say to Khmyelnitski 'That is a good friend of mine' and Khmyelnitski, with a sudden resolve that often comes to a drunkard, said: 'If he is thy friend, little son, give him fifty dollars and I will give him a safe-conduct.' And he gave me the safe-conduct; but, as for the money, I said, so as not to irritate the animal, that he should save it for the Haiduks for it is not the custom among officers to receive tips. They treated me with great respect as I left the tent, but I had hardly got outside when Bohun came up to me, 'We met each other once in Rozloga,' he said. 'Yes, I remember,' I said, 'but at that time I did not expect, little brother, that I should see you again in this camp,' and he answered, 'It is not my own will, but misfortune that has brought me here.' During the conversation I told him also how we had beaten him behind Yarmolints. 'I did not know with whom I was dealing at that time,' he said, 'I was wounded in the hand and had poor soldiers; for they imagined that Prince Yeremy was fighting

them.' 'And we did not know who you were,' I said, 'for if Pan Skshetuski had known it, one of you would not be alive to-day.' "

"You were right, but what did he think of it," asked Volodiyovski.

"He became embarrassed and said no more about it. He then told me that Kshyvonos had sent him with letters to Khymelnitski near Lemburg, that he might recover himself a little; and that Khmyelnitski would not let him return because he needed him as a representative on other missions. Finally, he asked 'Where is Pan Skshetuski?' and when I said, 'In Zamost,' he answered 'then perhaps we may meet' and then we parted."

"I judge that immediately after that Khymelnitski sent him to Warsaw," said Zagloba.

"He did; but wait a minute, sir. I returned to the fortress and reported to Pan Veyher about my mission. It was already late at night. The following day, they stormed us again, more obstinately than at first. I had no opportunity to see Skshetuski for three days, when I told him that I had seen Bohun and spoken to him. There were a number of officers standing near, among them Rogovski. When he heard that, he said mockingly 'I know that it is a question of a lady. If you are such a knight as people claim, there is Bohun; challenge him to a duel with swords, and be sure that this duellist will not let you off. We shall enjoy a fine spectacle from the walls, they make more fuss about you Vishnyovyetski men here than you deserve.' Skshetuski looked at Pan Rogovski as if he would bite him 'Do you advise me?' he asked, 'that is well, but I do not know if you, who make little of our valor, have the courage to go down among the 'blacks' and deliver my challenge to Bohun.' And Rogovski answered 'I have the courage, but I am neither kith nor kin to you—I will not go.' The others now laughed at Rogovski. 'Oh,' they said, 'now you are getting faint-hearted; but, when it was a question of somebody else's skin, you were very brave.' Rogovski, who is very proud, grew angry, and undertook to do it. The following day he took the challenge, but Bohun was not there. We did not believe his report; but now, after what you have told me, I see that he spoke the truth. Khmyelnitski must have really sent Bohun away and that was when you killed him."

"Yes, that was it," said Volodiyovski.

"But tell us," asked Zagloba, "where shall we now find

Skshetuski, "for, find him we must, in order to go with him at once to look for the girl."

"You can learn more about him on the other side of Zamost for they talk of nothing else. He and Rogovski have completely routed Kalin, a Cossack colonel, by driving him towards one another from opposite directions. After that Skshetuski destroyed, on his own account, two Tartar chambuls, defeated Burlay and fought different mobs."

"Does Khmyelnitski allow that?"

"Khmyelnitski would have nothing to do with them and says they were fighting contrary to his orders; otherwise no one would believe in his fealty and obedience to the king."

"How bad the beer is in this Konskovoli!" remarked Zagloba.

"Behind Lublin you will ride through a devastated land," said the Lithuanian; "for the expeditions went beyond Lublin, and the Tartars drag everybody into slavery and God, alone knows what they have plundered beyond Zamost and Hrubiesh. Skshetuski has already rescued several thousand prisoners and sent them back to the fortress. He is working with all his might, paying no attention to his health."

Here, Longin sighed and hung his head thoughtfully. Presently, he resumed:

"See here, I think that God in His great mercy will surely comfort Skshetuski and give him that alone which will make him happy; for this knight's services are many. In these times of destruction and self-interest, where each one thinks of himself, he forgets his own interests. He could have obtained leave from the prince long ago, in order to seek the princess; but, instead of that, when the terrible blow struck our dear mother country, he never slackened in his duty for a moment and worked unceasingly, though his heart was bleeding."

"He has the soul of a Roman, no one can deny it," said Zagloba.

"He might serve as an example."

"Especially to you, Pan Podbipyenta, for all through the war, instead of thinking of your mother country, you are looking for your three heads."

"God sees my heart," said Longin, raising his eyes to heaven.

"God has already rewarded Skshetuski with Bohun's death," said Zagloba, "and also by allowing the Commonwealth a time of rest. Now the time has come for him to think of looking for his lost happiness."

"Will you gentlemen accompany him?' asked the Lithuanian.

"Will not you?"

"I would do it with my whole heart, but what will become of the letters. I have one from the starosta of Yelets to His Majesty the king, another to the prince, and a third from Skshetuski, also to the prince, with a request for leave."

"We are bringing him his leave."

"Pshaw, but I must deliver the letters."

"You must go to Cracow, there is nothing else to be done. But, I tell you frankly that, in our expedition to look for the princess, I should like to have such fists and such shoulders as yours in our company; but I do not want you on any other account, for there we must simulate. The safest thing would be to put on Cossack dress and pretend we are peasants, but you would attract so much attention by your enormous height that everyone would ask, 'What kind of pole is that? Whence comes such a Cossack'—besides you cannot understand much about their language. No, no, you go to Cracow and we shall have to get along without you."

"I am of your opinion," said Volodiyovski.

"Then we will let it remain so," answered Longin. May God in His mercy bless and guide you. Do you know where she is hidden?"

"Bohun would not tell me, we know only what I heard when Bohun kept me a prisoner in the pig-pen; but that is enough."

"How will you find her?"

"That is my affair," said Zagloba. "I have succeeded in doing more difficult things. The chief thing now is to get to Skshetuski as soon as possible."

"Ask about him in Zamost. Pan Veyher must know where he is; he corresponds with him, and Skshetuski delivers the prisoners up to him. May God bless you!"

"The same to you," said Zagloba, "when you are in Cracow with the Prince, remember us to Pan Kharlamp."

"Who is that?"

"He is a Lithuanian of such great beauty that he has turned the heads of all the Princess's ladies in waiting in the capital."

Pan Longin started.

"Sir, you are joking?"

"Good-bye sir! the beer in Konskovoli is wretched," concluded Zagloba, winking at Volodiyovski.

CHAPTER XV.

Pan Longin set out for Cracow with a heart pierced by an arrow, and cruel Zagloba, accompanied by Volodiyovski, went to Zamost, where they did not even stay one day. The commandant Starosta of Velets had told him that it was a long time since he had heard anything of Skshetuski; and he thought that the regiments which Skshetuski commanded had gone to garrison Zbaraj, in order to protect that region from the bands of freebooters. This was all the more probable from the fact that Zbaraj, being the property of the Vishnyovyetski, was especially liable to the attacks of the prince's deadly enemy. A long and weary road lay before Volodiyovski and Zagloba; but, as they were obliged to travel this road in their search for the princess, and it mattered not whether sooner or later, they started without delay, resting no longer than was absolutely necessary, or than was required to rout the wandering bands.

They rode through regions so desolate where sometimes, for days at a time they never saw a human soul. The little towns lay in ashes, the villages were burned down and desolate, their inhabitants killed or taken into slavery. They found nothing on their way but corpses, ruins of houses and churches, smoking remains of villages, and howling dogs upon the ashes. Whoever had survived the Tartar-Cossack invasion, crept away into the depths of the forest and endured cold and hunger, not daring to come out of the forests for fear the danger might not be over yet. Volodiyovski fed his horse on the bark of trees, or cobs of half burned corn, which they picked up amid the ruins of what had been granaries; but they hurried forward seeking their subsistence chiefly in the provisions which they took from the marauding companies. It was already the end of October and in proportion as the former winter, much to the astonishment of all, had passed without snow, frost, or ice, this winter was more severe than usual. The whole course of Nature seemed changed. The earth was frozen hard, snow lay upon the plains; and,

along the margin of the rivers, a thin coating of ice could be seen in the mornings. The weather was dry, the pale sunbeams gave a little warmth at midday, but morning and evening a dark red glow was seen in the sky, the sure sign of an early and severe winter.

In addition to war and famine, a third deadly enemy threatened the wretched people—frost; and, yet, everyone looked for it longingly; as it was a far surer impediment to war than any negotiations. Pan Volodiyovski, as a man of experience and one who knew the Ukraine thoroughly, was full of hope that the expedition to find the princess would surely be successful; for the chief hindrance, the war, had been removed for some time.

"I do not believe in Khmyelnitski's sincerity," he said, "or whether he is returning to the Ukraine out of love for the king, or from the cunning of a fox. He knows that the Cossacks are good for nothing if they cannot fight behind earthworks. And in the open field, although they were five times our number, they could not stand against our regiments. They are now going into winter quarters and will drive the herds into the snow. The Tartars also want time to drive their captives home. If the winter is severe, we shall have peace until the grass is green once more."

"Perhaps longer, for they certainly respect the king's authority; but we do not need so much time. God willing, we shall arrange Skshetuski's wedding for Shrovetide."

"If only we do not miss him now, that would be a fresh trouble."

"He has three regiments with him, so it will not be like looking for one grain in a bushel; perhaps we may overtake him before we reach Zbaraj, if he is detained anywhere among the haydamaks."

"We cannot overtake him, but we ought to hear something about him on the road," answered Volodiyovski.

This, however, was not easy, for the peasants had seen regiments passing by, had heard of encounters with the marauders; but no one could tell whose men they were, as they might have been Rogovski's men just as easily as Skshetuski's. The two friends had no certainty in the matter. But they heard definite news of the defeat of the Cossacks by the Lithuanian soldiers. The rumor was already taking shape on the eve of Volodiyovski's journey from Warsaw, but it was doubted at first. Now the news with all details was circulated through

the whole country as an absolute certainty. The Lithuanian victory made up for the defeat of the royal forces by Khmyelnitski. Polksienjyts and savage Nebaba had lost their heads, and the still more redoubtable Kshechovski who, instead of a Starostship and a Voyevodaship and other honors, had earned impalement among the ranks of the rebels. It seemed as though a strange Nemesis had avenged the German blood which he had shed in killing colonels Flick and Werner in the reeds of the Dnieper, for he fell into the hands of the German regiment Radzivil. Although sorely wounded, he was dragged away to the stake, upon which the unfortunate man lingered in agony the whole day long before he finally gave up his black soul. This was the end of one who, through his courage and warlike genius might have become a second Stefan Khmyelnitski; but whose insatiable desire for wealth and position led him into treachery and perjury and in the end sent him to the most frightful of deaths, a death fit for Kshyvonos himself.

Polksienjyts and Nebaba who were with him, had lost almost twenty thousand Cossacks on the field of battle, all who had not perished in the swamps of the Prypets. Fear spread like a storm-wind across the thriving Ukraine, for all believed that after the great triumphs at the Zolta Woda, Korsun and Pilavyets, a time of defeat had arrived, similar to those which the rebels had experienced at Solonits and Kumeyka. Khmyelnitski himself, although at the height of his fame and more powerful than ever, vacillated when he heard of the death of his friend Kshechovski and began anew to seek for knowledge of the future among the fortune-tellers. They prophesied various things, among others, that a new war would take place; they spoke of conquests and defeats—but could not tell the hetman what would happen to him personally.

Through Kshechovski's death and on account of the winter, the truce was of longer duration; the country began to settle down; the devastated villages were once more inhabited and confidence returned to all the despairing and troubled hearts.

With the aid of this confidence, after a long and difficult journey, our two friends arrived happily in Zbaraj, where, after announcing themselves at the castle, they at once went to the commandant, in whom, to their great astonishment, they recognized Vyershul.

"And where is Skshetuski?" Zagloba asked, after the first greetings were over.

"He is not here," answered Vyershul.

"Have you the command of the garrison?"

"Yes. Skshetuski was in command, but he went away and left me as commandant until his return."

"And when did he promise to return?"

"He did not say; indeed he did not know himself, but he said when he left, 'if any one should come for me, tell them to wait for me here.'"

Zagloba and Volodiyovski looked at one another.

"How long has he been gone?" asked Pan Michael.

"Ten days."

"Pan Volodiyovski," said Zagloba, "let Pan Vyershul give us some supper, for we cannot take council on hungry stomachs; we will continue our conversation at the supper table."

"I am only too delighted to wait on you, gentlemen, for I am just going to sit down to table myself. Besides, Pan Volodiyovski, as my superior officer, will now take the command, so I am his guest and not he mine."

"Keep the command, Pan Kryshtof,' said Volodiyovski, "for you are older than I am and, besides, I must leave again soon."

It was not long before supper was ready. They sat down and ate and drank with enjoyment; and, after Zagloba had somewhat satisfied his hunger, with two plates of soup he said to Vyershul:

"You have no idea, Sir, where Pan Skshetuski is gone?"

Vyershul ordered the servants to leave the room and, after a moment's reflection, he said:

"I have an idea, but Skshetuski is very anxious to keep the matter a secret, and that is why I would not speak before the servants. He took advantage of a favorable opportunity—for we shall probably remain here quietly until the spring—and in my opinion has gone to look for the princess, who is in Bohun's hands."

"Bohun is no longer alive," said Zagloba.

"How is that?"

Zagloba now related for the third or fourth time all that had happened; for he always enjoyed telling it.

Vyershul, like Longin, could not sufficiently express his astonishment, and finally said:

"Well, then, it will be easier for Pan Skshetuski."

"It just depends on whether he finds her. Did he take any men with him?"

"No one, he rode alone, with one little Russian boy and three horses."

"Then he set to work prudently, for one can do nothing there except with cunning. One might get as far as Kamenets with a regiment, but in Ushyts and Mohilov there are nothing but Cossacks. There are good winter-quarters there. There is a nest of them in Yampol, and one must go there either with a whole division or quite alone."

"But how do you know that he has gone into that region?" asked Vyershul.

"Because she is hidden somewhere behind Yampol and he knew that; but there are so many glens, hollows, and bush that it would be hard enough to find her if one knew the exact spot; and how much harder when one does not know. I rode to Yahorlik with horses, and also to a council, that is how I know. If I were with him, it might be more easy; but as he is alone, I doubt very much if he finds her, unless some accident should show him the way, for he would not dare to ask any one."

"Then, you, gentlemen, wished to accompany him?"

"Yes. But what shall we do now, Pan Michael, shall we follow him or not?"

"I leave that to your good judgment."

"H'm! ten days have passed since he left—we cannot overtake him, and besides, he said we were to wait for him. God knows what way he may have taken; he may have followed the old highway, that leads through Ploskir and Bar, or he may have gone by way of Kamenets Podolski. It is hard to decide."

"Remember, also, gentlemen, that there are only surmises and we have no certainty that he has gone to look for the princess."

"That's just it, that's just it," said Zagloba. "He may have only gone to get information, and then return to Zbaraj, for he knew that we would go with him and he may be expecting us just at this time. It is a difficult matter."

"I would advise you to wait ten days," said Vyershul.

"Ten days is nothing. Shall we wait or not?"

"I think perhaps we had better not wait, for what should we lose by setting out to-morrow? If Skshetuski does not find the princess, perhaps God will give us better luck."

"See here, Pan Michael, we cannot undertake this thing without due consideration. You are young and anxious for

adventure," said Zagloba, "but there is a danger; for if he is looking for her alone, and we are also looking for her, it might easily arouse suspicion among the people in that neighborhood. The Cossack people are sly and fear that any one may discover their plans. They may be arranging with the Pasha, whose territory borders on Khotsim, or with the Tartars beyond the Dnieper for a war—who can tell? In that case they will keep a watchful eye on strangers and, especially, on any who may be asking their way. I know them; we might easily betray ourselves, and what then?'

"Well, it would be all the more easy for Skshetuski to fall into some trap, and we ought to hasten to his assistance."

"That is very true."

Zagloba sank into deep thought, so that his temples twitched. Presently he roused himself and said:

"'Taking everything into consideration, I think we ought to set out."

Volodiyovski breathed freely.

"And when?"

"After we have rested here about three days, so that we may be fresh in body and soul."

The following day, the two friends began their preparations for the journey, but, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, the evening before they were to start, Skshetuski's boy, the young Cossack Cyga arrived with news and letters for Vyershul. When Zagloba and Volodiyovski heard of it they went at once to the commandant's quarters and read what follows:

"I am in Kamenets whence the road through Satanov is safe. I am going to Yahorlik with Armenian merchants to whom Pan Bukovski directed me. They have Tartar and Cossack safe-conducts which will insure them a safe journey as far as Akerman. We are going to Ushyts, Mohilov, and Yampol, with silks, stopping in every place where there is the slightest trace of life. Perhaps God will help us to find what we seek. Tell my comrades, Volodiyovski and Pan Zagloba, to wait for me in Zbaraj if they have nothing else to do; for the road I have left behind me cannot be travelled by large numbers on account of the great mistrust of the Cossacks, who are wintering in Yampol and along the Dniester to Yagorlik, and have turned their horses out in the snow. What I cannot do by myself, three of us could not do, and I can easily get through as as an Armenian. I thank you, Pan Kryshtof, from my whole soul for your decision, which I shall

never forget as long as I live. But I could not wait for her any longer, for I passed every day in torture. I could not tell whether they would come, and this was just the time to set out, when all the merchants are setting out to buy candied fruits and silk stuffs. I am sending back my faithful boy. Take him under your protection; I have no need of him and I am afraid that as he is so young he may chatter about our affairs. Pan Bukovski vouches for those merchants that they are honest, and I believe it. In the belief that everything rests in the hands of the Almighty, who, if He will, may show us His mercy and shorten our tortures, Amen."

Pan Zagloba, after reading the letter through, looked at his companions, who were silent. At last, Vyershul said:

"I suspected that he had gone there."

"And what remains for us to do?" asked Volodiyovski.

"Well, what?" said Zagloba, shrugging his shoulders. "There is nothing for us to do there. I am glad that he is travelling with the merchants, for he can spy round everywhere without any one being suspicious. They will buy something in every cabin and every country-house, for half the Commonwealth has been plundered. It would be difficult for us, Pan Michael, to get beyond Yampol. Skshetuski is as dark as a Wallach, and could easily pass for an Armenian; you would easily be recognized by your flaxen moustache. Even a peasant's disguise would not be of much use. . . God bless him! We are of no use there, I must confess, although I am sorry to think that we cannot lift a hand to rescue that poor child. However, we have done Skshetuski a great service in killing Bohun; for, if he were alive, I would not answer for Yan's life."

Volodiyovski was much disappointed, he had looked forward to a journey full of adventure, and, now, he had the prospect of a tedious sojourn in Zbaraj.

"Perhaps we can ride to Kamenets," he said.

"And what would we do there, what should we live on?" answered Zagloba. It does not make any difference within what walls we vegetate, we must wait in any case! for such a journey will take Skshetuski a long time. A man remains young as long as he is occupied"—(here Zagloba let his head droop in a melancholy manner)—"and he grows old in inaction, but what is to be done? . . . Let him go without us. To-morrow we will have a solemn mass said that God may give him good luck. We have killed Bohun—that is the

principal thing. Let the horses be unsaddled, Pan Michael—we must wait."

The following morning, long, monotonous days of expectation began for the two friends; and neither drinking mead nor throwing dice was able to enliven them; they stretched out endlessly. The severe winter made itself felt; snow, two feet deep, covered everything like a shroud, the roofs of Zbaraj as well as the whole earth. Wild animals and flocks of birds approached human habitations. All day long was heard the croaking of innumerable flocks of crows and ravens. December passed, January, February—and still no news of Skshetuski. Zagloba became melancholy and declared he was growing old.

CHAPTER XVI.

The commissioners who had been sent by the Commonwealth to carry on negotiations with Khmyelnitski, finally made their way to Novosiolek amid the greatest difficulties; and remained there waiting for an answer from the victorious hetman, who during this time remained in Chigrin. They waited sadly and anxiously for, during their whole journey, they had been exposed to death; and their difficulties increased at every step. They were continually surrounded, by night as by day, by swarms of "blacks," who had become perfectly savage from war and slaughter, and howled for the death of the commissioners. From time to time they came upon bands without a leader, consisting of murderous and savage herders, who had not the slightest conception of the law of the land and thirsted for blood and booty. The commissioners had indeed an escort of a hundred horse, commanded by Pan Bryshovski and, besides that, Khmyelnitski, foreseeing what might occur to them, had sent Colonel Donyets to protect them with four hundred Cossacks. But the escort might at any time prove insufficient, for the crowd of "blacks" increased every hour and assumed an ever more threatening attitude; and whoever wandered for a moment from the train, or from his regiment, disappeared forever. They were like a handful of travellers surrounded by a herd of hungry wolves. Thus, whole days and weeks passed until one night in camp at Novosiolek they all believed that their last hour had come. The company of dragoons and the escort under Donyets had been carrying on a regular battle to protect the lives of the commissioners, who were already saying their prayers and commending their souls to God. The Carmelite Lentovski gave them absolution, one after another, while, from outside, each gust of air brought frightful cries, firing, hellish laughter, the clash of scythes, and cries of death and destruction, as well as demands for the head of the Voyevoda Kisiel, who was an especial object of their hatred.

It was a long, dreadful, winter night. The Voyevoda Kisiel

sat motionless for several hours, his head buried in his hands. He did not fear death, for since the time he left Hushch he was so exhausted, so weary and sleepless, that he would have gladly stretched out his arms to death—but his soul was filled with boundless despair. Was it not he who as a Russian in blood and bone had first undertaken the role of a peacemaker in this unexampled war; was it not he who, everywhere, in the Senate and at the councils, had stepped forward as the most zealous advocate of negotiations; he, who had supported the policy of the chancellor and the Primate; he, who had condemned most fiercely Prince Yeremy; who had worked in good faith for the welfare of the Cossack people and of the Commonwealth, and had believed, with the whole might of his earnest soul, that negotiations and concessions would settle everything, soothe and heal the bleeding wounds. And now, at the very moment that he was taking the baton and the concessions for the Cossacks to Khmyelnitski, he despaired of everything—for he saw with his own eyes the futility of his exertions, and beheld before him emptiness and an abyss.

Did they then demand nothing but blood, desire no other freedom than the freedom to rob and burn, thought the Voyevoda, suppressing the groan that sought to escape from his noble heart.

"The head of Kisiel! the head of Kisiel! and destruction to him," was the answer to his thoughts from the mob.

And the Voyevoda would willingly have sacrificed his white, careworn head, if one last spark of belief had not restrained him. The belief that something else was needed for their salvation and that of all the Cossacks, as well as for the welfare of the Commonwealth. Let the future teach them how to demand that.

And as he thought of this, a ray of hope and a certain amount of confidence lightened for a moment the darkness with which despair had clouded his soul, and the unhappy old man persuaded himself that these "blacks" did not represent the whole Cossack people, not even Khmyelnitski and his colonels, and that negotiations must be entered into with him.

But would they be lasting so long as half a million of rabble were under arms; would they not be disregarded at the first breath of spring and vanish like the snow which now lay on the steppes? . . . . Here he thought of the words of

Prince Yeremy: "One can show mercy only to the conquered," and again his thoughts became gloomy and again the abyss opened at his feet.

It was past midnight; the noise and the confusion had lessened, but the storm outside was raging more fiercely, and the snow was forming drifts. The weary rabble scattered in the various houses, and hope returned to the commissioners' breasts. Voytsiekh Miashovski, the under-Chamberlain of Lemburg, rose from the bench on which he was sitting, listened at the window which was covered with snow and said:

"It seems to me that we shall, with God's help, survive until the morning."

"Perhaps Khmyelnitski may send us a larger escort, for we cannot get to him with this one," said Sniarovski.

Zielanski, the Cup-Bearer of Bratslav, laughed bitterly.

"Who would take us for peace commissioners?"

"I was sent repeatedly as an envoy to the Tartars," said the standard bearer of Novogorod, "but in all my life I never made such a mission as this. In our person, the Commonwealth is suffering more humiliation than she underwent at Korsun and Pilavyets. I tell you, gentlemen, we ought to turn back, for there can be no question of negotiations."

"Let us turn back," repeated Bjozovski, the Castellan of Kiev. "As we cannot have peace, let us have war!"

Kisiel raised his brows and fixed his glassy eyes on the Castellan.

"The Zolta Woda, Korsun, and Pilavyets," he said gloomily.

And they were all silent until Kulchinski, the Treasurer of Kiev, began to tell his beads aloud, and the Master-of-the-Hounds Kshetovski put his hands to his head and repeated:

"What dreadful times! what dreadful times! God have mercy on us!" . . . .

The door was here opened and Bryshovski the dragoon captain of the Bishop of Posen, who was looking for shelter, stepped into the room.

"Illustrious Voyevoda," he said, "a Cossack desires an audience."

"That is well," answered Kisiel, "have the 'blacks' already scattered?"

"They have gone, but to-morow they will come again."

"Did they attack you badly?"

"Frightfully, but Donyets's Cossacks killed several of them. To-morrow they are going to burn us out."

"Well, let the Cossack come in."

Presently the door was opened and a tall, black-bearded form stood on the threshold.

"Who art thou?" asked Kisiel.

"Yan Skshetuski, lieutenant of the Hussars of the Prince Voyevoda of Russia."

The Castellan Bjorzovski, Kulchinski, and the Master-of-the-Hounds Kshetovski sprang from their seats. They had all served the year before under the prince, and had been at Makhnovka and Konstantinov and knew Pan Yan well, and Kshetovski was even related to him.

"Can it be! Is it true! then you are Pan Skshetuski?"

"What are you doing here, how did you get here?" asked Kshetovski, putting his arms around him.

"In the disguise of a peasant as you see," said Skshetuski.

"Illustrious Voyevoda," cried the Castellan Bjozovski, "this is the bravest knight of the regiments of the Voyevoda of Russia, celebrated in the whole army."

"I greet him with a joyful heart," said Kisiel, "he must be a very determined knight to have managed to get as far as this." Then, turning to Skshetuski:

"What is your request from us?"

"That you will permit me to travel with you, gentlemen."

"You are putting yourself into the jaws of the dragon, but if you wish it we have no objection."

Skshetuski bowed in silence.

Kisiel looked at him in astonishment. He was struck by the earnestness and sorrow in the stern face of the young knight.

"Tell me, Sir," he asked, "what motive drives you into that hell which no one visits voluntarily?"

"Unhappiness, illustrious Voyevoda."

"That was a useless question," said Kisiel. "You have lost someone you love and wish to seek them there?"

"That is it."

"Is it long since?"

"Since last spring."

"What! and you have only now started out to find them? It is almost a year! What have you been doing all this time?"

"I have been fighting under the Voyevoda of Russia."

"Would not that magnanimous master grant you leave?"

"I would not take it."

Kisiel looked once more at the young knight and there was a silence, which was interrupted by the castellan of Kiev.

"All of us who have served under the prince know of this young cavalier's misfortune; we have all shed tears over him, and we often regretted that he preferred to serve his country as long as the war lasted, instead of thinking of his own happiness. But it was only the more praiseworthy; he has set a rare example in these degenerate times."

"If it prove that my word has any weight with Khmyelnitski, believe me, sir, I will bespeak his kindness in your undertaking," said Kisiel.

Skshetuski bowed again.

"Go and rest now," said the Voyevoda, graciously, "you must be very tired, as we all are, for we have not had a moment's rest."

"I will take him to my room, he is a relative," said the Master of the Hounds Kshetovski.

"Let us go and take some rest also," said Bjozovski, "as we do not know if we shall get any sleep to-morrow night."

"Perhaps an everlasting sleep," answered the Voyevoda.

Then he retired to his room, at the door of which his boy was awaiting him, and the others also retired. Kshetovski took Skshetuski into his quarters, which were only a few doors away; the boy lighted them with a lantern.

"How dark the night is, the snow is is falling harder than ever," said the Master of the Hounds. "Ah, Pan Yan, what hours we have passed through to-day! I thought that our last hour had come. The 'blacks' had almost placed their knives at our throats. Bryshovski had lost courage and we were beginning to take leave of each other."

"I was among them," answered Skshetuski. "To-morrow evening, they expect a new band of murderers whom they have informed of your presence here. To-morrow, we must set out, no matter what happens. You are going to Kiev, are you not?"

"That depends on Khmyelnitski's answer which Prince Chetvertynski has gone to obtain. This is my room, step in, Pan Yan. I ordered some wine to be heated and we will fortify ourselves before going to sleep."

They stepped into the room, where a mighty fire burned in the chimney; the steaming wine was standing on the table. Skshetuski eagerly reached for a glass.

"I have touched nothing since yesterday," he said.

"You look wretched, it is easy to see that you are wasted by sorrow and fatigue. But tell me about yourself, for I know

your affairs. You intend, then, to seek the princess among those people?"

"To seek her, or death," answered the knight.

"You will sooner find your death. How do you know that the princess is there at all?" asked the Master of the Hounds.

"Because I have already looked for her elsewhere."

"Where?"

"Along the Dniester, as far as Yahorlik. I travelled with some Armenian merchants, for I had proofs that she was hidden there. I have been everywhere, and now I am going to Kiev because Bohun is said to have taken her there."

Skshetuski had scarcely mentioned Bohun's name, when the Master of the Hounds raised both hands and clasped his head.

"By God!" he cried. "I have not told you the most important thing. I heard that Bohun was killed."

Skshetuski turned pale.

"What?" he said. "Who said so?"

"That nobleman who had already rescued the princess and who fought so bravely at Konstantinov. I met him as he was riding to Zamost; we passed each other on the road. Almost before I had asked him what news he had, he answered that Bohun was dead. 'Who killed him?' I asked. He answered, 'I did'—and we separated."

The color which had mounted into Skshetuski's face suddenly paled.

"That nobleman," he said, "is always joking. One cannot believe him; no, no, he cannot possibly have killed Bohun."

"And did you not see him, Pan Yan? For I remember that he said he was going to Zamost to see you."

"I did not expect him in Zamost, he must now be in Zbaraj. But I was in a hurry to overtake the commissioners, so I did not come from Kamenets by way of Zbaraj and have not seen him at all. God only knows if all that he told me about her that time was true. He pretends that while Bohun had him prisoner he overheard that he had hidden her behind Yampol, and was then going to take her to Kiev for the marriage ceremony. Perhops there is no more truth in that than in anything else that Zagloba says."

"Why do you want to go to Kiev?"

Skshetuski did not reply and, for a time, no sound but the howling of the wind was to be heard.

"For," said the Master of the Hounds, putting his finger on

his forehead, "if Bohun is not dead you would fall into his hands."

"I am going there to find him," answered Skshetuski gloomily.

"Why?"

"God shall decide between us."

"But he will not fight with you, but will put you in chains at once and kill you or sell you to the Tartars."

"I shall go with the commissioners, under their protection."

"God grant that we may manage to keep our own heads out of the noose, and how can we talk of the protection we grant!"

"If it is hard to live, it will be easy to die."

"Have mercy on yourself, Yan; for in this case it is not a question of death only, for no one can escape that, but they may sell you to the Turkish galleys."

"Do you think so, Pan Kshetovski? Do you think that it will be worse for me than it is now?"

"I see you are in despair, you have no confidence in God's mercy."

"You are mistaken, sir. I say that it fares badly with me on earth, but, by God's help, I have been reconciled long ago. I desire nothing, do not complain, do not curse, do not run my head against a wall; I only try to fulfill what seems to be my duty, as long as life and strength hold out."

"But sorrow is wasting you like a poison."

"God gave the sorrow that it might waste me and will send a remedy when he sees fit."

"That is an unanswerable argument," said the Master of the Hounds. "God alone can help you; our hope for ourselves and for the Commonwealth rests in Him. The King has gone to Chenstohovo. Perhaps he will entreat the most Holy Virgin for us; otherwise we are lost."

A silence ensued, broken only by the challenge of the dragoons outside, "Wer da!"

"Yes, yes," said the Master of the Hounds after some time, "we all belong more to the dead than to the living, the people of this Commonwealth have forgotten how to laugh, they only sigh, like the wind in the chimney; but I believed that better times would come, before I set out to come here with the others. I see now that my hope was unfounded; ruins, war, hunger, and death—nothing else, nothing else."

Skshetuski was silent, the flames which darted from the hearth up the chimney lighted up his stern emaciated face. Presently he raised his head and said earnestly:

"All is transitory; all passes, vanishes, and nothing remains."

"You speak like a monk," said the Master of the Hounds.

Skshetuski did not answer. The wind moaned ever more sadly in the chimney.

CHAPTER XVII.

The following morning the commissioners, accompanied by Skshetuski, left Novosiolek. It was a melancholy journey, for, at every halting place, in every little town, they were threatened with death, and everywhere met with insults that were worse than death; more particularly as the commissioners in their person and office, represented the majesty of the Commonwealth. Pan Kisiel became ill and they had to carry him in his sleigh into all the inns where they stopped for the night and into the houses and bakeries. The Under-Chamberlain of Lemburg shed tears at the insults to himself and to the fatherland; Captain Bryshovski also fell ill from annoyance at the abuse they received and from their fatigues; so Skshetuski took his place and led the unfortunate cavalcade farther into the crowds of rebels; amid insults, threats, rough treatment, and fighting.

In Byalogrod it seemed as though the last hour had come for the commissioners. The mob beat Bryshovski, who was sick, killed Pan Jniazdovski and, nothing but the arrival of the metropolitan, to hold an interview with the Voyevoda, prevented the intended slaughter. In Kiev, they would not allow the commissioners to enter the town. On the eleventh of February, Prince Chetvertynski returned without an answer from Khmyelnitski. The commissioners did not know what to do or in what direction to turn. If they returned, they would leave behind them the enormous bands of peasantry who were waiting only for the breaking off of negotiations to murder the embassy. The mob became bolder; they seized the bridles of the dragoons' horses, blocked their way, threw stones, pieces of ice, and frozen snow-balls into the Voyevoda's sleigh. In Gvozdova, Skshetuski and Donyets were obliged to fight a bloody battle, in which they routed several hundred of the "blacks." The soldiers of Novogorod and Sniarovski rode again to Khmyelnitski, to represent to him that he should come to Kiev for further negotiations. But the Voyevoda had little hope that they would reach him

alive. In Khvastova, the commissioners were obliged to remain inactive and look on, while the people killed prisoners of both sexes. They drowned them in holes in the ice, poured water over them in the icy air, thrust them with hay-forks, and flayed them alive with their knives. Eighteen such days had passed, before an answer finally came from Khmyelnitski, saying that he would not go to Kiev, but would wait in Pereyaslav for the Voyevoda and the commissioners. The unfortunate envoys breathed freely once more, in the hope that their tortures were now at an end; and, after they had crossed the Dnieper at Tripol, they went for the night to Voronkov, which was only six miles from Pereyaslav. Khmyelnitski came half a mile on the road to meet them, apparently out of respect for the royal embassy. How he had changed from the time when he had exalted himself in order to avenge the supposed insult—"quantum mutatus ab illo!" as the Voyevoda of Kisiel justly wrote.

He came with a number of horses, with officers, sergeants and military music, with the bunchuk and red uniform as though he were a ruling prince. The commissioners' suite at once stopped; but Khmyelnitski sprang forward to the foremost sleigh in which sat the Voyevoda, looked for a time into his reverend countenance, raised his fur cap slightly, and said:

"I greet you, Pan Commissioners, and you, Voyevoda. You should have undertaken to negotiate with me earlier, when I was less important and did not know my own strength; but, as the king sends you to me, I will receive you joyfully into my country."

"We greet you, hetman," answered Kisiel. "His Majesty, the King, sends us to inform you of his forgiveness, and to grant you the justice you seek."

"For the forgiveness, I thank him, and the justice I have already obtained myself, by holding this"—here he tapped his sword, "at your necks, and I will continue to procure it, if you do not give me satisfaction."

"You do not receive us very graciously, Hetman of the Zaporojians, as ambassadors of the King."

"I will not negotiate with the snow on the ground; but at a more convenient time," answered Khmyelnitski, roughly. "Let me get into your sleigh, Kisiel, and then I will do you the honor of driving with you."

As he said this, he dismounted and approached the sleigh.

Kisiel, however, moved over to the right side, leaving the left free for Khmyelnitski.

When he saw this he frowned and said:

"Let me sit at the right side."

"I am a senator of the Commonwealth."

"What do I care for that. Pan Pototski is the first senator and Crown hetman, and I hold him a prisoner and will let him go when I see fit; perhaps to-morrow, with some others, to be impaled.

Kisiel's pale cheeks flushed.

"I represent the king in my person."

Khmyelnitski's face lowered, but he restrained himself and sat down at the left of Kisiel, murmuring:

"He may be king in Warsaw, but I am king in Russia. I have not yet humbled you enough, I see."

Kisiel did not reply, but raised his eyes to heaven. He had a foretaste of what awaited him, and he thought rightly that if the way to Khmyelnitski was a Golgotha, a sojourn with him was martyrdom itself.

The horses hastened to the town, twenty shots were fired from the cannon and all the bells rang. Khmyelnitski, as though he wanted to prevent the commissioners from considering the salute as an exceptional honor granted to him, said to the Voyevoda:

"I have received not only you, but other ambassadors sent to me, in the same manner."

And Khmyelnitski spoke the truth. Ambassadors had been sent to him as though he were a reigning prince. On his return from Zamost, while he was yet impressed by the election and by the defeats he had suffered from the Lithuanian army, the hetman did not possess half his present pride, but since Kiev had received him with torches and flags; since the academy had greeted him in the following words: "*Tanquam Moisem, servatorem, salvatorem, liberctorem populi de servitute lechica et bono omine Bogdan*—by the Grace of God!" and, when they finally called him "*Illustrissimus Princeps*" "there was aroused the beast in him, according to the word of one of his contemporaries. He actually felt his own power on a firm footing, which he had hitherto lacked.

The embassy was a tacit recognition, not only of his power but also of his sovereignty. The faithful friendship of the Tartars, which he had bought by an abundance of booty and many unfortunate prisoners; which this leader of the people

had allowed them to pick from among the people, was an assurance of assistance against every enemy. Consequently, Khmyelnitski, who at Zamost had bowed to the royal majesty and to the will of the monarch, was now blinded with pride; and, convinced of his own strength, of the disorder in the Commonwealth and of the inefficiency of her leaders, was now ready to lift his hand even against the king. His ambitious soul was already dreaming, not of the independence of the Cossacks, not of the restoration of the former privileges of the Zaporojians, not of justice for himself; but of a sovereign state, in which he would wear the prince's cap and bear the sceptre.

And he felt himself master in the Ukraine. Zaporoj stood by him, for, under no commander had it been so swamped with blood and booty. The naturally savage people thronged to him, for while the Mazovians and the Vielkopolska bore without murmuring that burden of authority and oppression which all over Europe rests on "Ham's descendants," the Ukraine peasant breathed in with the air of the steppes such an intense, passionate love of freedom as could flourish nowhere else but in the wide steppes. How could he follow his master's plow, when his glance was bounded by God's, and not by man's, desert; when, from beyond the rapids, Sich called to him, "leave your masters, come to freedom;" when the cruel Tartar had taught him to fight, and his eyes had become accustomed to the smoke of the cannon and to slaughter, and his hands to handling firearms? Why not rather raid with Khmyelnitski and snap his fingers at his masters, than bend his proud back before a sub-governor.

And another reason why the people flocked to Khmyelnitski was, that whoever did not do so was made prisoner. In Stambul, they gave ten cartridges for one slave and three slaves for one bow seasoned in the fire, so plentiful were they. The rabble had no choice, a curious song descended from the memory of those times and was long sung by subsequent generations around their fires, a curious song about that leader who was called the Moses of the Zaporojians.

"Oh, that the first, best bullet might not miss this Khmel!"

The towns, the villages and the hamlets disappeared; the land was changed into a desert and a ruin—a wound which centuries could not heal. But that leader and hetman did not or would not see it—for he never looked behind him. He

grew more important and fertilized the land with blood, and fire, and destroyed his own people, his own country, in his frightful selfishness. And, even now, he was conducting the commissioners to Pereyaslav amid the thunder of salutes and the ringing of bells; as if he were a sovereign lord, a hospodar and a prince.

The commissioners moved forward into the lion's den with bowed heads as the last spark of hope was extinguished in their hearts.

Skshetuski, who was riding behind the second sleigh, looked eagerly at the faces of the officers who had come with Khmyelnitski, to see if Bohun was among them. After his fruitless search along the Dniester, as far as beyond Yahorlik, he had come to one decision, as his last and only hope of solving the difficulty. He determined to seek Bohun and challenge him to a duel, for life or death. The unhappy knight knew indeed, that, in this game of chance, Bohun might take him without any fight, or give him over to the Tartars. But he thought better of him than that; he knew his bravery, his rashness, and was almost sure that, without any hesitation, Bohun would decide on an honorable duel for the sake of the princess. He, therefore, arranged his plans in the midst of his sorrow, and decided to bind Bohun by an oath, in case he should fall, to give Helena her liberty. Skshetuski did not think of himself, and, on the consideration that Bohun might say "If I die, she is neither for you nor for me," he was ready to agree to that and to swear to it, if he could only get her out of his hands. She could seek refuge in a cloister for the remainder of her life. He hoped to find peace in the war, and, if he should not fall, he would become a monk as soon as peace was declared; as all suffering souls did in those days. Pan Skshetuski saw his way plainly and clearly, and, as the idea of a duel with Bohun had been suggested to him in Zamost and, as his search among the ravines of the Dniester had been unavailing, this seemed to be the only resource left him; for this purpose he had hastened without resting from the Dniester till he reached the commissioners, hoping that he would inevitably find Bohun among Khmyelnitski's attendants, or in Kiev. He hoped it all the more earnestly as, according to what Zagloba had said in Yarmolints, the Cossack was going to Kiev to his wedding, with three hundred candles.

Skshetuski now sought him in vain among the colonels, but

in return he found many acquaintances, whom he had known in former times of peace; such as Dziadzial, whom he had often seen in Chigrin; Yashevski, who had come as an envoy from Sich to the Prince; and Yarosha, a former officer of the prince Naokolo Paltsa, and Hrusha, and many others. He determined to ask them.

"We are old acquaintances," he said, approaching Yashevski.

"I knew you in Lubni, you are Prince Yeremy's favorite," answered the officer, "we drank and caroused together in Lubni! And what is your prince doing?"

"He is well."

"He will not feel quite so well in the spring; he and Khmyelnitski have not met yet. But they will meet and then one of them will have to die."

"As God ordains."

"Come! God is gracious to our little father Khmyelnitski, your prince will never return across the Dnieper to his Tartar coast. Khmyelnitski has many warriors, and whom has the prince? He is a true soldier. Are you not serving any longer under his banner?"

"I am travelling with the commissioners."

"Well, I am glad to have met an old acquaintance."

"If you are glad, you can do me a service; and I will ever be grateful to you."

"What kind of service?"

"Tell me where Bohun is, the famous ataman, formerly of the Pereyaslav battalion, who must be in high standing among you to-day."

"Silence," answered Yashevski threateningly, "it is fortunate for you that we are old acquaintances and that we have drunk together, otherwise I would have laid you out in the snow with this club."

"Skshetuski looked at him in astonishment, but, as he had a good deal of self-restraint, he simply closed his hand on his club.

"Are you mad?"

"I am not mad, and I do not wish to threaten you; but Khmyelnitski has given orders once for all, that if any of you, or even the commissioners, should ask any questions, we were to kill you on the spot. If I do not do it, some one else will, so I warn you out of kindness."

"But I am asking as a private matter."

"Well that makes no difference, Khmyelnitski gave the order to his colonels and told them to repeat it to the rest, 'should anyone ask you for a bundle of wood for the stove, or for potash, kill him dead.' Tell that to your people."

"I thank you for the advice," said Skshetuski.

"I warned you; but any other Pole I would have killed."

A pause followed. The cavalcade had arrived at the gate of the town. Along both sides of the road and in the streets were swarms of "blacks" and of armed Cossacks, who, out of respect for Khymelnitski, did not curse or throw snow, but looked gloomily at the commissioners, clenched their fists, and grasped the hilts of their swords.

Skshetuski formed his dragoons into a square, raised his head and rode quietly and proudly through the wide street, paying not the slightest attention to the threatening glances of the crowd. In silence, however, he thought how much presence of mind, sang froid, and Christian patience would be required to do what he had undertaken; so as not to fall a victim, at the first step, in this sea of hatred.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the following day, the commissioners held long consultations as to whether they should at once present Khmyelnitski with the king's gifts, or whether they should wait until he had become more humble and showed some regret. It was decided to endeavor to win him over by kindness and the king's favor, by handing him the gifts at once. It was announced that the presentation would take place and the ceremony was appointed for the following day.

From early morning, bells rang and shots were fired. Khmyelnitski waited outside his residence, in the midst of his colonels and all the officials, and an immense crowd of Cossacks and "blacks." He wanted to show the whole nation what honor the king was bestowing upon him. He sat therefore in the midst of his regiments, with the bunchuk on an elevation, clad in a white cloak lined with sable, and, beside him, the envoys from neighboring countries. With his hands placed on his sides, standing on a velvet cushion with gold fringe he awaited the commissioners. There came from the "blacks" at every moment, a murmur of joy and gratification at sight of the leader, in whom, prizing power as they did above everything else, they saw the embodiment of this power. He was just such a figure as the popular fancy pictured, this unconquered hero, the victor of the hetmans, of the nobility and especially of the Poles, who, before his time, had enjoyed the fame of being invincible. Khmyelnitski had grown somewhat older during this war, but he still held himself erect, his giant shoulders still betrayed the old ability to overthrow kingdoms or erect new ones. His strong face bore the impress of an unyielding will, and uncurbed pride, and the consciousness of security gained by victories; but it was red from excessive drinking; anger and fear were slumbering in the furrows of his face; it was easy to guess that if they should be aroused, the people would give way beneath their terrible power, as a forest before a storm; his eyes, whose lids were inflamed, were already flashing with impatience,

that the commissioners had not come earlier with their gifts. The frost froze his breath which looked like two clouds of steam, coming from his nostrils, like the two columns of smoke that come from Lucifer's nostrils, and in this mist that came from his lungs, he looked proud and gloomy in his festal array, with the envoys at his side; in the midst of his colonels, with a sea of "blacks" around him.

Presently, the commissioners drove up; before them came the drummers, beating their drums, and behind them the trumpeters with their trumpets to their mouths, and their their cheeks blown out giving forth a melancholy, long-drawn-out sound, as though it were the funeral of the glory and dignity of the Commonwealth. Behind the band the Master of the Hounds, Kshetovski, bore upon a cushion of velvet the baton; Kulchynski, the treasurer of Kiev bearing a red flag with the eagle and the inscription on it, came next; then came Kisiel, walking alone, tall and thin, his white beard flowing down to his waist; with suffering depicted on his aristocratic face, and his soul filled with boundless despair. O few steps behind the voyevoda came the rest of the commissioners and the procession closed with the dragoons of Bryshovski under Skshetuski.

Kiesiel walked slowly, for this moment showed him plainly that, beneath the tattered veil of negotiations; beneath the appearance of welcoming the king's favor and his pardon; something else, the humiliating truth peeped out, and even a blind man could see it; and even deaf ears could hear it; because it cried aloud to all. "Thou, Kisiel, dost not go now as a bearer of favors; but thou goest on foot in order to beg for favor. in return for the baton and the standard, to this leader of peasants, in the name of the whole Commonwealth· thou, her Senator and voyevoda. . . " The soul of the lord of Brusilov was crushed, he felt as powerless as a worm, as lowly as dust and, in his ears, counded the words of Yeremy: "It is better not to live than to be the slave of peasants and heathen." What was he, Kisiel, in comparison with this Prince of Lubni, who had opposed this rebellion with a frowning brow, amid the sulphurous fumes of war; wrapped in the smoke of gunpowder like Jupiter? What was he? Under the burden of these thoughts, the heart of the Voyevoda was broken; smiles forsook his face forever; joy had fled from his heart; he felt only that he would a hundred times rather die than take one more step forward

on this road. But he went on, nevertheless; for his whole past life, all his efforts and endeavors; and the whole, pitiless logic of his earlier attempt at negotiations drove him forward.

Khmyelniski awaited him with his hands placed on his side, with pouting lips and frowning brow.

The train advanced and Kisiel stepped forward until he reached the elevation; the trumpeters ceased their music; the drums stopped beating—a deep silence fell on the crowd, only the frosty air moved the flag that Pan Kulchynsi carried.

Suddenly the stillness was broken by a voice, curt but commanding, in which was expressed the unspeakable might of despair, which takes no count of anything or anybody.

"Dragoons, to the rear, follow me!"

It was Skshetuski's voice.

All heads turned in that direction, even Khmyelnitski raised himself in his chair to see what was happening. The commissioners paled. Skshetuski was standing in his stirrups, erect, pale, with flashing eyes, his unsheathed sword in his hand, and, partly turned towards the dragoons, he repeated, in thundering tones, the command, "follow me!"

Through the silence was heard the clatter of the horses' hoofs on the frosty streets; the practised dragoons faced about on the instant; the lieutenant placed himself at their head, gave a signal with his sword and the whole procession returned slowly towards the dwelling of the commissioners.

Astonishment and bewilderment were depicted on all faces, not excepting Khymelnitski's for, in Skshetuski's voice, there was something unusual, but no one knew exactly whether this sudden return of the escort did not belong to the ceremonies of the day. Kisiel alone, understood it all. He understood that the negotiations as well as the lives of the commissioners and their escort hung at this moment on a hair. But, before Khmyelnitski had time to recover himself, he mounted on the elevation and began his speech. He began with the assurance of royal clemency for Khmyelnitski and for all the Zaporojians, but his speech was presently interrupted by another incident, which had one advantage, that it completely turned all attention from what had previously occurred. Dziedzial, an old colonel, who stood beside Khmyelnitski, threatend the voyevoda with his staff and cried angrily:

"What are you saying there, Kisiel? The king? What king?—but you, kinglets, princes and nobles, have roused

much trouble and you, Kisiel, bone of our bone, hast deserted us and stand by the Poles. We have had enough of thy speech, for we can obtain with the sword all that we need."

The Voyevoda looked into Khmyelnitski's eyes with a grieved expression.

Do you keep your colonels under such discipline, hetman."

"Silence, Dziedzial," cried the hetman.

"Silence, silence! He got drunk this morning," repeated the other colonels, "take yourself off or we will take you by the neck."

Dziedzial wished to make his voice heard still further, but he was literally taken by the collar and removed from the circle.

The Voyevoda spoke on in well arranged and well chosen words. He set before him the great testimonials he would receive, and that they would be the tokens of the justification of a dignity, which he had hitherto usurped by his own might. The king might have punished him; but he forgave him, as Khmyelnitski had shown himself obedient at Zamost, and as his late acts had not occurred during the rule of the present king. It would, therefore, be advisable that Khmyelnitski, after committing so many crimes, should show himself grateful for such mercy and distinction; should stop the shedding of blood, restore peace among the peasantry and begin negotiations with the commissioners.

Khmyelnitski received in silence the baton and the flag, which he at once ordered to be unfurled above his head. At this sight, the "blacks" broke out into a howl of joy, that for a time drowned every other sound. A certain satisfaction beamed upon the face of the hetman who said, after a pause:

"I thank His Majesty, the King, most humbly for the great favor that he has shown me through you, as also for the symbol of authority over the army, and for his pardon of my late transgressions. I always said that the king was on my side and against you, false knights and princes; the best proof of it is that he has expressed his satisfaction that I cut your throats. And I will continue to cut, if you do not obey me and the king in everything."

Khmyelnitski had spoken the last words in a loud voice, frowning and scolding as though his anger were rising; the commissioners were astonished at this unexepected ending to his answer. Kisiel, however, said:

"The king commands you, hetman, to cease the bloodshed and to commence negotiations with us."

"I do not shed blood, the Lithuanian army does that; for I have received news that Radzivill has destroyed my possessions of Mozyr and Turov. If this is confirmed, I have enough distinguished prisoners from among you whose throats I will order to be cut at once. I shall not hurry about the negotiations, it would be difficult to conclude negotiations now, as the army is separated; I have only a handful of colonels with me, the rest are in winter-quarters; I can do nothing without them. Besides, why should we stand here talking in the cold? What you were commissioned to give me, you have given me; and all see that I am now hetman appointed by the king. And now come and take some dinner and gorzalka with me, for I am hungry."

Saying this, Khmyelnitski strode towards his residence, followed by the commissioners and colonels. In the large, middle room, stood a table, which bent beneath the weight of plundered silver ware, among which the Palatine Kisiel might have found some that had been robbed from him the previous summer in Hushch.

On the table stood mounds of pork, beef, Tartar pilav and the whole room smelt of millet vodka, which stood in silver flagons. Khmyelnitski sat down and placed the Voyevoda of Kiev at his right, and the Castellan Bjozovski at his left, and, putting his hand on the flagon of gorzalka, said:

"They say in Warsaw that I drink Polish blood; but I prefer gorzalka and leave the other to the dogs."

The colonels broke into a loud laugh.

This was the insult that the Hetman aimed at the commissioners before the meal, who gulped it in silence, in order, as the sub-treasurer of Lemberg wrote, "not to irritate the beast."

Heavy perspiration stood on Kisiel's pale forehead.

The entertainment began.

The officers took up great pieces of meat from the plates in their hands. Khmyelnitski himself waited on Kisiel and Bjozovski: The dinner began in silence, for everyone was satisfying his hunger. The silence was only broken by the crunching of bones between the teeth of the feasters or by the sound of gulping drink. From time to time, one or the other would venture a word, which remained unnoticed, until at length, Khmyelnitski, who had partially satisfied his

hunger and tossed down several goblets of millet gorzalka, turned suddenly to the Voyevoda, and said:

"Who commands your escort?"

Kisiel became uneasy.

Skshetuski, a noble knight," he said.

"I know him," said Bogdan, "and why would he not stay when you handed me the presents?"

"Because he was only sent with us as a protection and not to assist us, and he had his orders."

"And who gave him the orders?"

"I," answered the Voyevoda, "because I thought it was not fitting that the dragoons should be at our elbow when I was handing you over the presents."

"But I think it was something else, for I know that this soldier is stiff-necked."

Yashevski here interrupted the conversation.

"We do not fear the dragoons in the least," he said. "They had some mighty Poles among them at one time, but at Pilavyets we learned that they are no longer the same Poles who formerly beat the Turks, the Tartars, and the Germans . . . "

"No longer the Zamoyskis, the Zolkievskis, the Khodkieviches, the Khmyeletskis, and the Konyetspolkis," interrupted Khmyelnitski, "but Tkhorzovski and Zayontskovski,[1] men, children clothed in iron armor. They nearly died of fright when they caught sight of us, although, on that Wednesday, we had only three thousand Tartars there . . . "

The commissioners were silent, but their meat and drink became even more bitter to them.

"I beg you most humbly to eat and drink," said Khmyelnitski, "for, if you do not, I shall believe that our simple Cossack fare is not agreeable to your noble palates.'

"If your throats are too narrow, we can cut them," cried Dziedzial.

The colonels, who were already quite drunk, laughed loudly once more; but Khymelnitski looked at them threateningly and they were silent.

Kisiel who had been ill for several days, was as white as a sheet.

Bjozovski's face was so red that it looked as though the

[1] Tkhorzovski and Zayontskovski are fictitious names; the former means "coward" and the latter "hare," intended as a direct insult to the Polish Commissioners.

blood would start through the skin; he could not contain himself any longer, and shouted:

"Have we come here to dinner or to listen to insults?"

Khmyelnitski answered:

"You came here to enter into negotiations and, in the meanwhile, the Lithuanian army is burning and slaughtering. They have destroyed Mozyr and Turov I hear; and, if it is true, I will have the heads chopped off four hundred prisoners, before your eyes."

Bjozovski, who was foaming with rage a minute before, now controlled himself. It was, indeed, as Khmyelnitski said. The life of the prisoners depended on the hetman's mood, a wink of his eye. One must bear all and endeavor to soothe his anger, and to bring him back to a "milder and healthier mood of mind."

With this intention, the naturally timid and gentle Carmelite Lentovski began in a soft voice:

"The good God grant that the news from Lithuania about Mozyr and Turov may not be confirmed."

But, hardly had he spoken, when Fedor Vyeshnyak a Cherkass colonel, leaned over and swung his staff in order to strike the Carmelite on the neck. Fortunately, he did not reach him, for four other diners were sitting between them, so he cried out:

"Silence, priest, it is none of your business to show us our faults, come outside and I will teach you to honor the Zaporojian officers."

The rest endeavored to quiet him, and, as they could not succeed, they threw him out of the room.

"When do you wish to open the negotiations, Hetman?" asked Kisiel, with the intention of giving a different direction to the conversation.

Unfortunately, Khmyelnitski was no longer sober, and he returned a quick and decisive answer.

"To-morrow we will take counsel and pass sentence. I am drunk now; why do you bother me now about the commission, instead of letting me eat and drink in peace. I am tired of all that, we must now have war" (bringing his closed fist down on the table so that the glasses and plates rattled.) "In the next four weeks I will sweep out everyone, from the lowest to the highest. I will trample on you all and finally sell you to the Turkish Sultan. The king will be king to exterminate the nobles, dukes, princes; if it is a prince he cuts his throat, if it is a Cossack, he does

the same. You threatened me with the Swedes, but, even they, will not compel me. Tukhay Bey, my brother, my heart, the only falcon in the world, is near me and ready to do all that I wish."

Here, Khmyelnitski, with the peculiarity of drunkenness, suddenly changed from anger to the deepest emotion, his voice trembled with suppressed tears at the remembrance of Tukhay Bey.

"You wish me to draw my sword against the Turks and the Tartars, but nothing will come of it. I will march against you with my good friends. I have already sent out regiments to command that the soldiers shall feed their horses and hold themselves in readiness to march, without wagons, without cannon; for I can find all that among the Poles. Whoever takes a wagon from a Cossack shall have his throat cut. I am not taking any myself, or, at most, only saddles and provision sacks. Thus, I will go to the Vistula and shout: 'Sit still and keep silence, Poles!' and if you shout from behind the Vistula I will find you there. I have had enough of your nobles, your dragoons, you cursed insects, who live only on lies."

He sprang to his feet, kicked away the stool on which he was sitting, tore his hair, stamped on the floor and shouted:

"We must have war, for I have received the absolution and the blessing for it! What do I care for commissioners and commissions; I do not want a truce."

Presently, he became aware of the terror of the commissioners. It suddenly occurred to him that, if they should at once go away, the war would have to begin in winter; therefore, at a time when the Cossacks could not throw up earthworks, and would not be able to offer resistance to the enemy on the open field. So he quieted himself somewhat, and sat down again on the stool. His head sank on his breast, he placed both hands on his knees and breathed heavily. Then, he once more seized the goblet of gorzalka, "Here's to the health of His Majesty the King," he shouted.

"To his health and glory," repeated the colonels.

"Come, Kisiel, do not worry," said the hetman, "and do not take what I said to heart, I am drunk. The fortune tellers told me that we must have war, but I will wait until the new grass grows; and then I will enter into negotiations; and then I will set the prisoners free. They tell me you are ill, we will drink to your health."

"I thank you, Hetman of the Zaporojians," said Kisiel. "You are my guest, I do not forget that."

As he said this, Khmyelnitski was again overcome by his emotions and, placing his arm around the Voyevoda's neck, he laid his great red face beside the other's pale, emaciated cheeks.

The other officers followed his lead and, approaching the commissioners, shook their hands warmly, clapped them on the shoulders and repeated after the hetman: "When the new grass grows." The commissioners suffered tortures. The peasants' breath, reeking of brandy, covered the faces of these highborn noblemen, who endured the handshakes of their perspiring hands with as much aversion as they did the insults. There was, however, no lack of threats, in between these expressions of good will. Some called out to the Voyevoda: "We will enjoy cutting down the Poles, but you are our man!" Others said, "And what do you think, gentlemen; formerly you beat us, now you beg us for mercy! Death and destruction to the white handed gentlemen!" The ataman Yovk, a former miller from Nestevar cried: "I have cut up my master Prince Chetvertynski." "Give us Yeremy," cried Yashevski staggering, "and we will give you your health."

It had become unbearably warm and close in the room. The table covered with the remains of the meat and bread, and soaking with vodka and mead was a disgu ting sight. Presently, some fortune tellers came into the room, with whom Khmyelnitski generaly sat and drank until midnight, while listening to their foretelling. They were strange figures, old and bent, yellow with age, or still young; and read the future in wax, grains of wheat, fire, the foam of water, the bottom of bottles, or in human fat. Jokes and laughter were heard among the younger of these and the colonels. Kisiel was ready to faint.

"We thank you for your dinner, Hetman," he said in a weak voice.

"I will come to you to dinner to-morow, Kisiel," answered Khmyelnitski, "and now go. Donyets will conduct you with his soldiers into your house, that the 'blacks' may not do you any harm."

The commissioners bowed and went out. Donyets was awaiting them on the outside with his soldiers.

"O God! God! God!" whispered Kisiel to himself, cover-

ing his face with his hands. They proceeded slowly to the commissioners' houses. It turned out, however, that these were no longer beside each other. Khmyelnitski had intentionally placed each one in a different quarter of the town that they might not meet and consult so easily. The Voyevoda Kisiel, weary, exhausted, hardly able to stand on his feet, at once retired and would see no one until the next day; only towards evening, he sent for Skshetuski.

"What have you done?" he said to him, "what have you done, sir? Your life and ours are at stake."

"Illustrious Voyevoda, mea culpa!" answered the knight. "But I was beside myself and I would rather have died a hundred times than have witnessed such things."

"Khmyelnitski guessed your motive and I had difficulty in quieting the animal in him and accounting for your act. But he will come to see me to-day and will certainly ask for you, so tell him that I had commanded you to lead the soldiers away."

"From to-day Bryshovski will take the command again, he feels better."

"So much the better, you have too proud a neck for the present times. We have no fault to find with your behavior, except that you are not cautious enough; but we know that you are young and have a sorrow that you can hardly bear."

"I am accustomed to sorrow, illustrious Voyevoda, but I cannot endure disgrace."

Kisiel shuddered slightly, as though someone had touched an open wound; then he smiled, sadly and resignedly, and said:

"Such words have become my daily bread. At first, when I heard them I wept bitter tears; but now I can no longer weep."

Skshetuski's heart was filled with pity at the sight of this venerable man, with the face of a martyr, who was passing his latter days in a double pain, that of the body as well as the soul.

"Illustrious Voyevoda," he said, "God is my witness that I was thinking only of the present dreadful days; when the crown officials and senators must bend their heads before these vagabonds, for whom the stake should be the only reward."

"God bless you, for you are young, upright, and I know had no evil intention; but what you are saying is what the prince

says and what the army, the nobles, the Diet, and half the Commonwealth says—and the whole burden of contempt and hatred falls upon me."

"Each serves his country as he thinks best; may God judge the good intention. But, as regards Prince Yeremy, he serves his country with his life and his property."

"And he is covered with fame and suns himself in it," replied the Voyevoda. "But what has happened to me? Oh, you said rightly, may God judge a good intention, and grant rest, in the grave at least, to those who suffer so unspeakably in this life."

Skshetuski was silent, and Kisiel turned his eyes to heaven in silent prayer and in a few moments spoke again:

"I am a thorough Russian, bone and blood. The remains of the Princess Viatoldych rest in this land, therefore I love her, and the favored people who have been nourished at her breast. I saw the injustice on both sides; saw the wild lawlessness of the Zaporojians, but also the unbearable pride of those who sought to crush this wild, warlike people and enslave them. What remained for me to do, for me, a Russian, and at the same time a faithful son and senator of the Commonwealth, I united with those who said "Pax Vobiscum," as both my nature and my heart bade me; for among these was the blessed king, our father, the chancellor, the primate, and many others; and I saw that civil war was destruction for both parties. I desired to devote my whole life, till my latest breath, to securing peace; and, even after some blood had been shed, I thought, I will be an angel of union; and I went thither and worked, and still work although in pain, amid tortures, disgrace and desperation, which are more dreadful than anything else. And now, by the love of God, I do not know if your prince took up his sword too soon, or if I came too late with the olive branch; but one thing I know, that my work is in vain, that my strength is leaving me, that I have too late run my grey head against a wall; that I am going to the grave, seeing before me only darkness and destruction. Great God!—general destruction."

"God will send help."

"Oh, that He might send me a ray of hope before my death, that I may not die with despair in my heart, I would thank Him for all my sorrows, for the cross that I have borne my life long, for the fact that the mob desired my life, that I was called a traitor at the Diet, for my lost fortune, for the dis-

grace in which I am living, for all the bitter reward that I received from both parties."

As he said this, the Voyevoda raised his emaciated arms to heaven and two big tears, possibly the last in life, flowed down his cheeks.

Skshetuski could stand it no longer, he sank on his knees before the Voyevoda, seized his hand and said, in a voice trembling with emotion:

"I am a soldier, and am going a different road from you, but I honor your service and your sorrow."

With these words, this nobleman and knight of Vishnyovyetski's army, pressed to his lips the hand of this Russian, whom a few months before, he had called a traitor as did others. And Kisiel laid both hands on his head, and said, gently:

"My son, may God comfort thee, guide and bless thee, as I bless thee."

The complicated business of the negotiations began this very day. Khmyelnitski came very late and in a very bad humor to dine with the Voyevoda. He announced at once, that all that he had said yesterday about a commission at Whitsuntide and about the setting free of the prisoners, at the time of the negotiations, had been said while he was drunk, and that he saw now that people must have been trying to make a fool of him. Kisiel again humored and quieted him, allowing him to be in the right; but, according to the words of the Chamberlain of Lemburg, "surd tyranno fabula dicta." Khmyelnitski treated the commissioners so rudely that they preferred even the Khmyelnitski of the day before. He struck Pan Pozovski with his baton, simply because he had not introduced himself to him soon enough, although Pozovski was dangerously ill and then almost dying.

Neither kindness nor the persuasions of the Voyevoda were of any use, and it was not until he had drunk some gorzalka and some excellent Hushch mead, that his humor improved. But now, he would on no account permit any allusion to the matter in hand, only saying, "Let us drink—drink—the day after to-morrow we will attend to business. If you do not agree to that I will go." At three o'clock in the morning he insisted on going into the Voyevoda's sleeping room. The latter opposed this, under all sorts of pretexts; as he had shut Pan Skshetuski in there, for fear that, if this unyielding soldier should meet Khmyelnitski, something might happen

that would be ruinous to the officer. Khmyelnitski, however, insisted, and went into the room, Kisiel following. How great, then, was the astonishment of the Voyevoda, when the hetman, spying the knight, nodded to him and cried:

"Skshetuski, why don't you drink with us?"

He stretched his hands invitingly towards him.

"Because I am ill," answered the lieutenant bowing.

"Why did you ride away yesterday? That spoiled my whole enjoyment."

"He had orders to do it," said Kisiel.

"Do not say a word, Voyevoda; I know him, and know that he did not wish to look on when you were honoring me. Oh, he is a case! But what would not go unpunished in another, I will forgive him, for I love him; he is my dear friend."

Kisiel's eyes opened wide in astonishment, but the hetman turned again to Skshetuski:

"And do you know why I love you?"

Skshetuski shook his head.

"You think it was because you rescued me from the noose that time at Omelnik, when I was only a poor fellow and was being hunted like a wild animal; but it is not for that reason. I then gave you a ring, containing some dust from the grave of Christ; but, you, horned soul, did not show me the ring when you fell into my hands—well, I let you go, we were quits. But that is not why I love you; you have done me another service which has made you my warm friend, and for which I am indebted to you."

Skshetuski looked up in astonishment at Khmyelnitski

"See, how astonished they look," said the hetman, as if he were talking to a third person. "I will tell you what I heard in Chigrin, when I came there from Bazavluk with Tukhay Bey. I enquired everywhere for my enemy Chaplinski whom I could not find; but they told me what you did to him after our first meeting; that you had taken him by the neck and the seat of his trousers and had banged him up against the door and had thrashed him like a dog until he bled. Ha!"

"That is true, I did so," said Skshetuski.

"Oh that was good, that was good, you did well; but I will find him yet. What are the negotiations and commissions for, otherwise. I will find him and will settle with him in my own way. But you gave him pepper."

Then he turned to Kisiel and told the story again.

"He took him by the coat collar and by the seat of his

trousers, and lifted him up as if he were a little fox; pushed the door open with him, and threw him into the street."

Here Khmyelnitski began to laugh, so that the echo resounded in the parlor and was heard in the dining-room.

"Sir voyevoda, send for some mead, I must drink to the health of this knight, my friend."

Kisiel opened the door and called to a servant, who immediately brought three goblets filled with Hushch mead.

Khmyelnitski clinked glasses with the Voyevoda and with Skshetuski and drank until his head steamed and his face brightened with a smile. He became very jovial and, turning to the lieutenant, said:

"Demand what you will?"

Skshetuski's pale face flushed a bright red, but no one spoke.

"Fear nothing," said Khmyelnitski, "my words are not smoke; demand what you will, not about anything about Kisiel's business."

Although he was drunk, Khmyelnitski always knew what he was doing.

"If I may be allowed to benefit by the interest which you, hetman, have taken in me, I demand justice from you. One of your colonels has done me a wrong . . . "

"I will cut his throat!" interrupted Khmyelnitski, angrily.

"I do not care for that; let him only fight a duel with me."

"I will cut his throat," repeated the hetman, "who is he?"

"Bohun!"

Khmyelnitski's eyes flashed, and he struck his hand to his forehead.

"Bohun?" said he, "Bohun is dead, the king wrote me that he fell in a duel."

Skshetuski was astonished. Zagloba then had spoken the truth.

"And what has he done to you?" asked Khmyelnitski

Skshetuski's face flushed a deeper red. He dreaded to mention the princess before this half drunken hetman, lest he should hear some unpardonable insult.

Kisiel helped him out.

"It is a serious matter, about which the castellan Bjozovski told me. Bohun has stolen this knight's betrothed, hetman, and has hidden her no one knows where."

"Are you looking for her?" asked Khmyelnitski.

"I looked for her along the Dniester, because he has hidden

her there; but I could not find her. I heard, however, that he was going to take her to Kiev for the wedding. Give me the commission, hetman, to go to Kiev and look for her there. I ask nothing further."

"You are my friend, you have beaten Chaplinski, I give you not only the right to go and seek her there, wherever it pleases you; but I command that whosoever is detaining her shall deliver her into your hands, and I will give you a safe conduct and a letter to the Metropolitan, that he may search for her in the nunneries. My word is not smoke," and, he opened the door and called Vyhovski to come and write the order and the letter. Charnota, although it was four o'clock in the morning was obliged to go and fetch the seal. Dziedzial brought the safe conduct and Donyets, received orders to accompany Skshetuski to Kiev, with two hundred horsemen; and as far as the first Polish settlement.

The following day Skshetuski left Pereyaslav.

CHAPTER XIX.

If Zagloba found time hang heavy on his hands in Zbaraj, it was still more tedious for Volodiyovski, who longed for war and adventure. It happened, indeed, that, from time to time, certain regiments left Zbaraj to drive away the swarms of freebooters who were setting fire along the banks of the Zbruch. But this was not regular war, only little expeditions which the cold weather and the severe winter made difficult and which caused great labor but brought in little honor. Consequently Pan Michael daily urged Zagloba to hasten to the assistance of Skshetuski of whom they had heard nothing for some time.

"He has certainly been exposed to dangers yonder and has perhaps already lost his life," said Volodiyovski. "We must set out at once, even though we should lose our lives with him."

Zagloba resisted no longer, for he felt as though he should die of ennui in Zbaraj, and was astonished that mushrooms had not already began to sprout all over him. But he delayed the journey in the hope that at any moment they might receive news of Skshetuski.

"He is brave, but very cautious," he replied to Volodiyovski's entreaties, "let us wait a couple of days longer; perhaps a letter may come and prove that our expedition is quite unnecessary."

Volodiyovski recognized the justice of this argument and tried to possess his soul in patience, but the time seemed to creep along. Towards the end of December, the cold prevented even skirmishes, and the neighborhood became peaceful. The only interest they had was the news which penetrated the gray walls of Zbaraj from the outside.

They discussed the coronation, and the Diet, and whether Prince Yeremy would be made commander-in-chief, as he certainly deserved to be, in preference to any other warrior. Many were annoyed with those who maintained that the present direction of things in favor of negotiations with

Khmelnitski, Kisiel alone could be promoted. Volodiyovski had to fight several duels on this account; Zagloba, to undertake several drinking-bouts; and there was even danger of his becoming a confirmed drunkard, as, not satisfied with drinking among the officers and noblemen, he was not ashamed to drink even in the citizen's drinking-shops; and to go to baptisms and weddings in their houses, where the mead, for which Zbaraj was noted, pleased him exceedingly well.

Volodiyovski took him to task and did it was particularly unbecoming for a nobleman to put himself on a familiar footing with persons in such low position, and that the whole nobility suffered through his want of self-respect. Zagloba answered that the laws were at fault in allowing the lower classes to thive and to attain to comforts that were properly fit only for the nobility. He prophecied that no good could come of such prerogatives. But he continued to act as heretofore and, really, one could hardly blame him, in those dreary winter days; full of expectation, uncertainty, and ennui.

The regiments of the prince came gradually in greater numbers to Zbaraj, which led people to expect war in the spring. Meanwhile, everyone's courage seemed to rise. Among others, Pan Longin arrived with Skshetuski's hussar regiment. He brought word that the prince had fallen into disfavor at court, and also told that Pan Yanush Tyshkievich, the Voyevoda of Kiev were dead, the man who, according to general opinion, was to be Kisiel's successor in office. And, last of all, he told of the severe illness which had overtaken Pan Lashch the field commander in Cracow. As for the war Pan Podbipyenta had heard from the prince, himself, that it could only be continued through the force of inevitable necessity; as the commissioners, provided with instructions to make all possible concessions to the Cossacks, had already set out to see Khmyelnitski.

Podbipyenta's report was received with regular fury by Vishnyoveyetski's officers, and Zagloba proposed that they should enter a protest at court and should form a confederation; for, as he said, he did not wish to see his services at Konstantinov made of no account.

Amid these stories and uncertainty, the whole of February passed and almost the half of March; and yet, no news came of Skshetuski.

Volodiyovski insisted more and more that they should set out.

"We are bound to seek not only the princess, but also Skshetuski," said he.

And yet Zagloba was right in deferring their journey from day to day, for, towards the end of March, the Cossack Zakhar arrived and brought a letter from Kiev, addressed to Pan Volodiyovski. Pan Michael at once called Zagloba and, after they had shut themselves up with the messenger in a room apart, he broke the seal and read as follows:

"All along the Dniester, as far as Yahorlik, I found no trace. Thinking that she must be hidden in Kiev, I joined the commissioners and went with them to Pereyaslav. Having, quite unexpectedly, received a safe-conduct from Khmyelnitski, I went to Kiev and looked everywhere, assisted by the metropolitan himself. There are a number of our men here, among the residents and hidden in the cloisters; but, for fear of the 'blacks', they do not let themselves be seen, and consequently it makes it more difficult to look for anyone. God has not only guided and protected me. but he has given me favor in Khmyelnitski's eyes; and, therefore, I trust that He will continue to help me and have mercy on me. I have requested Father Mukhovietski to perform a solemn votive mass, at which I hope you will pray for my success."

Skshetuski."

"Praised be God Everlasting," cried Volodiyovski.

"There is a postscript," said Zagloba, who was looking over the knight's shoulder.

"So there is," said Pan Michael, continuing to read:

"The bearer of this letter, the sergeant of the Mirgorod camp, served me faithfully when I was imprisoned in Sich, and has helped me also in Kiev; and he undertakes to deliver this letter to you at the peril of his life. Take him under your protection, Pan Michael, and see that he wants for nothing."

"Come, that is a brave Cossack, perhaps the only one," said Zagloba, reaching his hand out to Zakhar.

The old man shook it without servility.

"You can count surely upon a reward," said the little knight.

"He is a falcon!" answered the Cossack, "how I love him! I did not do this for money."

"Many a nobleman would be proud of your sense of chivalry," said Zagloba. "So you are not all beasts over there, not all of you; but, never mind that. So Pan Skshetuski is in Kiev?"

"Yes, Sir."

"And in safety? for I hear the "blacks" are carousing there."

"He is staying with Donyets the colonel. Nothing can harm him, for Khmyelnitski, our little father, has commanded Donyets to watch over him at peril of his life as the eye in his head."

"Wonders will never cease! How did Khymelnitski develop this affection for Skshetuski?' '

"He has loved him for a long time."

"And did Skshetuski tell you what he was looking for in Kiev?"

"Why should he not tell me when he knew that I was his friend. I helped him to search, or I searched alone—and of course he had to tell me what I was to look for."

"And have you found no trace yet?"

"None! the Poles that are concealed there know nothing of each other, so it is not easy to find her. You heard that the 'blacks' were committing murder, but I saw it for myself. They murder, not only Poles, but those who conceal the Poles; even monks and nuns. In the convent of Saint Nicholas there were twelve Polish women among the nuns; they smoked them out, together with the nuns, and, when the poor things ran into the street, they hunted them and threw them into the Dnieper. Ah, how many of them have been drowned there!"

"Then perhaps she is dead."

"Perhaps.'

"But no," interrupted Volodiyovski, "if Bohun took her there, he certainly put her somewhere in safety."

"Where would she be safer than in a convent? That is the only place where one would be sure of finding her."

"Ugh!" said Zagloba. "Do you believe Zakhar, that she is dead?"

"I do not know."

"It is evident that Skshetuski is in good spirits," said Zagloba, "God proved him, but he has also comforted him. And you, Zakhar, is it long since you left Kiev?"

"Some time ago, sir, I left Kiev at the time that the commissioners passed through there on their homeward journey. A crowd of Poles wanted to escape with them, and fled across the snow-fields, the steppes, and through the forests to Byalogrod; but the Cossacks followed them and slew them. Some

were left behind, some were killed, and many were ransomed by Pan Kisiel, as long as he had a coin left."

"Oh, the dog-souls! So you travelled with the commissioners?"

"I travelled with them as far as Hushch and from there to Ostrog and then I came on alone."

"You are an old acquaintance of Skshetuski's?"

"I made his acquaintance in Sich and took care of him when he was wounded; and there I learned to love him as though he were my own child. I am old and have no one to love."

Zagloba called a boy and ordered some mead and meat to be brought and they sat down to supper. Zakhar eat with enjoyment as he was tired and hungry, and he eagerly dipped his grey moustache into the dark liquid, he tasted it, smacked his lips, and said:

"Excellent mead!"

"It is better than the blood that you drink," said Zagloba, "but I think that as you are a good fellow and love Pan Skshetuski you will not return to join the insurrection, but will remain with us. You will not suffer."

Zakhar raised his head.

"I have brought the letter, I shall return; I am a Cossack, I will remain with the Cossacks, not fraternize with the Poles."

"And will you fight against us?"

"That will I, I am a Cossack of Sich. We have chosen Khmyelnitski, our little father, as hetman; and now the king has sent him the baton and the standard."

"There you have it, Pan Michael!" said Zagloba, "did I not tell you that we must protest?"

"From what camp are you?"

"From the Mirgorod camp, but it is not in existence any longer."

"What happened to it?"

"Pan Charnyetski's hussars destroyed it at the Zolta Woda; and I, and all who survived, are now with Donyets. Pan Charnyetski is a brave soldier; he is our prisoner; the commissioners asked for him."

"And we have also prisoners belonging to you!"

"So it is. In Kiev, they say that our best warrior is in captivity with the Poles; although others say that he is dead."

"Who was it?"

"Oh, the celebrated ataman Bohun."

"Bohun received his death-wound in a duel."

"And who fought him?"

"This knight, here," Zagloba answered, pointing to Volodiyovski.

Zakhar's eyes almost started out of his head, and his face became crimson. He was about to put the second quart of mead to his mouth, but it spluttered through his nose as he broke into a loud laugh.

"This knight kill Bohun?" he asked choking with laughter.

"What, the devil!" cried Volodiyovski frowning, "this messenger takes too much upon himself."

"Do not be angry; Pan Michael," interrupted Zagloba, "he is a good man, it is evident. He does not know how to flatter—but then he is a Cossack. And, on the other hand, it does you all the more honor, that, in spite of your small stature, you have already carried off so many victories. You have a puny body, but a mighty soul. Do you know that I, myself, looked at you after the duel, although I had seen you fight with my own eyes; for it seemed impossible that such a little fellow. . . . "

"Enough of that," growled Volodiyovski.

"I am not your father; you need not bear me any malice. But I tell you one thing, that I wish I had such a son; and, if you wish it, I will adopt you; will leave you my whole fortune; for it is no disgrace to have a great soul in a little body. The Prince himself is not much taller than you, yet Alexander of Macedon is not worthy to be his squire."

"But what makes me angry is that one can see no results in Skshetuski's letter," said Volodiyovski, already pacified, "thank God that he did not lose his own life on the banks of the Dniester. But, up to this, he has not yet found the princess; and who can vouch that he will find her?"

"That is true, but, as God, through our hands, has freed him from Bohun and has led him safely through so many dangers and accidents; has filled Khmyelnitski's stony heart with an extraordinary love for him; it cannot be that he should be finally consumed by torture and sorrow. If you do not see the hand of Providence in all this, Pan Michael, your intelligence is blunter than your sword; but it is a fact that a man cannot possess all the virtues at the same time.' '

"I see only one thing," said Volodiyovski, tugging at his

moustache, "that there is nothing for us to do over there, and that we must continue to remain here until we are completely dried up."

"I shall dry up sooner than you, for I am older than you, and it is well known that a turnip shrinks and bacon becomes rusty from old age. Let us thank God that all our cares seem to be coming to a happy termination. I have worried not a little about the princess, more than you, at any rate, and not less than Skshetuski; for she is my little daughter, and I could not love my own child as well as I do her. They even say that we are as alike as two goblets, but I love her, in any case; and you would not see me as happy or peaceful as I am, if I were not confident that her misery will shortly come to an end. To-morrow, I will begin to compose an epithalamium, for I write beautiful poetry, and have only lately slighted Apollo for Mars."

"What have we to do with Mars?" answered Volodiyovski. "May the devil take the traitor Kisiel, with all the commissioners and their negotiations. There will be peace in the spring as sure as two and two are four. Pan Podbipyenta, who has spoken to the prince, says the same thing."

"Pan Longin understands as much about public affairs as a goat does about pepper. He dangled at the court after that crested lark, more than he did anything else, and stood sentry over her like a setter before a covey of partridges. God grant that someone else may snatch her away from him—but that is of no consequence. I do not deny that Kisiel is a traitor, the whole Commonwealth knows that well enough, but as regards the negotiations, I think that old witch prophesies equivocally."

Here Zagloba turned to the Cossack.

"And what do your people say, Zakhar? Is it war or peace?"

"There will be peace until the new grass grows; and in spring it will be death and destruction—either to us or the Poles."

"Be comforted, Pan Michael, I heard that the blacks were arming everywhere."

"That will be such a war as has never yet been seen," said Zakhar. "They say, with us, that the Turkish Sultan is coming; and the Khan with all his hordes; and that our friend Tukhay Bey is near the border and has never been home."

"Take comfort, Pan Michael,' 'repeated Zagloba, "there is a prophesy of a new king, whose whole reign will be filled with bloodshed. So it is probable that it will be a long time before we can sheathe our swords. We shall be worn out from constant war, as a broom is by constant sweeping; but that is the lot of a soldier. When we begin to fight again, keep near me, Pan Michael, and you will see glorious deeds and learn how we fought in former, better times. My God! people are no longer what they used to be; you, yourself, are not, Pan Michael, although you are a fierce soldier, and killed Bohun."

"You are right, sir," said Zakhar, "there are no such men as there used to be."

And he looked at Volodiyovski searchingly and shook his head.

"But that this knight should have killed Bohun—no, no, I cannot believe it."

CHAPTER XX.

Old Zakhar returned to Kiev after resting a few days and, during this time, news was received that the commissioners had returned home without any great hope of peace; indeed, they almost despaired of it. They had only succeeded in arranging a truce to last till the Russian Whitsuntide; and then a new commission would undertake to conclude negotiations, with the whole army at their back. Khmyelnitski's conditions and demands were so mountain-like that no one believed that the Commonwealth would accept them; consequently, both sides made preparations for arming themselves completely.

Khmyelnitski sent one envoy after another to the Khan, requesting him to come to him with all his forces; he sent also to Stambul, where Pan Byechinski had been staying for some time, as an envoy from the king. In the Commonwealth, a call for a general arming was expected at any moment. News was received of the appointment of new leaders; Ostorog, Lantskorontski and Firley and of the absolute retirement of Prince Yeremy Vishnyovyetski from all military affairs. He could henceforth only protect the mother country with the assistance of his own troops. Not the Prince's soldiers alone, not only the nobility of Russia, but even the supporters of the former Commanders were indignant at this selection and slight; for they decided, justly, that, if Vishnyovyetski's sacrifice had received recognition, as long as there was a hope of negotiating; his retirement, in the event of war, would have been an unpardonable mistake, as he, alone, was competent to measure his strength with Khmyelnitski and to conquer this celebrated rebel leader. Finally, the prince himself came to Zbaraj in order to collect as many troops as possible and to stand prepared for war. A truce had been concluded; but appeared futile from moment to moment. Khymelnitski, indeed, beheaded several officers here and there, when, in spite of the truce, they attacked castles and troops; but he was powerless against the count-

less crowds of wandering "blacks" and marauders who, either knew nothing of the truce, or did not wish to know, or were perhaps ignorant of the very meaning of the word. These flocked unceasingly into the territory that was protected by the truce and thus set at naught all Khmyelnitski's promises. On the other hand, private regiments and border soldiery, in pursuit of the robbers, frequently crossed the Prypets and Horyn into Kiev territory; or, in their zeal, hunted them into the interior of the province of Bratslav, and there, while resisting Cossack attacks, fought regular battles, which were carried on frequently with great energy and loss of life. Consequently, incessant disputes arose between the Poles and Cossacks on account of breach of faith, which no one, in fact, had the power to prevent. The truce existed therefore only in so far as Khmyelnitski, himself, on one side, and the king and the hetmans on the other did not take the field. But war had actually begun before the authorities had engaged, and the first warm beams of the spring sun lighted up, as formerly, burning villages, towns, and castles; and shone on slaughter and human misery.

Whole bands of rebels came from Bar, Khmyelnik and Makhnovka burning, plundering, and killing, close under the walls of Zbaraj. These were cut down by Yeremy's officers by his orders, though he, himself, tok no part in the petty battles; but was ready to move with his whole force into the field, as soon as the hetman should do so. He therefore sent out companies with orders to avenge blood with blood, and robbery and murder with the stake. Among others, Longin started out and fought at Charny Ostrov; but he was only a knight terrible in battle; with the prisoners he was so gentle that they did not send him out any more. Volodiyovski, especially, distinguished himself in these expeditions as a fighter, and perhaps had his equal only in Vyershul. No one understood how to surprise the enemy with such lightning speed, no one could creep up so unperceived behind them and scatter them to the four winds in a total rout, make prisoners, kill or hang them up; in short, he struck terror all around and won the favor of the prince. From the end of March to the middle of April, Volodiyovski destroyed seven bands of freebooters, each of which was three times as powerful as his own force. He never ceased fighting and became more greedy for war, as though the sight of bloodshed gave him new energy.

The little knight, or rather the little devil, never ceased urging Zagloba to accompany him on these expeditions, for he enjoyed his society above all things, but the more sedate nobleman withstood all his inducements, and excused his inaction in the following manner:

"I have too big a belly for these shocks and violent exertions, Pan Michael; and, besides, one man cannot do everything. To hew my way with the hussars among the close ranks of the enemy in the broad daylight, to destroy camps, to conquer flags—that is in my line, that is what God created and fitted me for; but nightly hunts among the bushes for ragamuffins, I leave to you; for you are as slippery as an eel and can get through anywhere. I am a knight of the old days and would rather tear my prey, like the lion, than to look for it behind the bushes like a pointer. And, besides, I have to go to sleep immediately after supper, that is my time to retire."

Pan Volodiyovski rode off alone and conquered alone until one day after setting out towards the end of April he returned about the middle of May, sad and troubled, as though he had suffered a defeat and lost his men. So it appeared to all, but this was a mistaken surmise. On the contrary, Volodiyovski had penetrated, during this long and difficult expedition, as far as Holovni, beyond Ostrog and had found there not an ordinary band of "blacks" but several hundred Zaporojians, about half of whom he cut down and took the others prisoners. Consequently, this deep sadness which covered his naturally joyous face like a cloud, was the more remarkable. Many wished to know the cause of it at once, but Volodiyovski said not a word, but went, the instant he dismounted, to a long interview with the Prince, accompanied by two unknown knights; and, after that, betook himself to Zagloba with the utmost haste, although several inquisitive friends tried to hold him back by the sleeve.

Zagloba looked with a certain astonishment at the two gigantic men whom he had never seen before; the gold stripe on whose shoulders showed that they belonged to the Lithuanian army.

Voldiyovski said, however, "Fasten the door, sir, and let no one in, for we have weighty matters to talk over."

Zagloba gave his servant the order, then looked uneasily at the new arrivals; judging from their manner that they had nothing good to tell.

"These," said Volodiyovski, pointing to the youths, "are the princes Bulyhov-Kurtsevich, Yur and Andrey."

"Helena's cousins," cried Zagloba. The princes bowed, and answered at the same moment,

"The cousins of the deceased Helena."

Zagloba's red face turned as pale as the sky; he threw up his hands as though a bullet had struck him and, with gasping breath and glaring eyes—said, or rather, moaned:

"What do you say!"

"We have news that the princess was killed in the Convent of St. Nicholas," said Volodiyovski sadly.

"The 'blacks' smoked out twelve young ladies and several nuns in one cell, and our cousin was among these," added Yur.

Zagloba answered nothing this time; but his face, just now so pale, became so flushed that his friends feared a stroke of apoplexy. Then his eyelids gradually drooped, and he covered his eyes with both hands; while from his lips came a groan once more.

"Oh! what a world! what a world!" Then he was silent.

And the princes and Volodiyovski began to mourn.

"We have gathered relations and friends together to rescue thee, sweetest maid," said the little knight, over and over again, amid his sighs; "but we came too late with our assistance. Our good intentions, our courage, our sword are in vain, for thou dwellest now in another, better world than this; in the train of the Queen of Heaven."

"Sister!" cried the gigantic Yur whose sorrow seized him afresh, "forgive us our fault and we will, for every drop of thy blood, shed a pail of the enemy's blood."

"And may God help us?" added Andrey.

Both men raised their arms to heaven. Zagloba rose from the stool on which he was sitting, went out a few steps towards the bed, staggered as though he were drunk and fell on his knees before the crucifix.

Presently the castle bells chimed midday. They sounded as mournful as though they were tolling for a funeral.

"She is no more," said Volodiyovski again. "The angels have taken her to Heaven and left us only sighs and tears."

Zagloba's stout body was shaken with sobs while the others kept on mourning. The bells continued ringing. After a while, Zagloba became calmer and they thought he had even fallen asleep on his knees. But it was not very long

before he raised himself from the ground and sat on the edge of his bed. He was like another man, with his bloodshot eyes and sunken head. His underlip hung down on his chin and on his pallid face was an expression of bewilderment and decrepitude unusual to him; so that it really appeared as though the jovial, lively, and effervescing Zagloba had died, and left in his place an old man, bowed with age and weakness.

Presently Pan Longin stepped into the room in spite of the protests of the servant who was watching the door, and the moans and the sorrow began afresh. The Lithuanian recollected Rozloga and his first meeting with the princess, her sweetness, her youth and beauty. But, presently, it occurred to him that there was some one who was far more unhappy than any of them; and that was her betrothed, Pan Skshetuski—and he began at once to ask the little knight about him.

"Skshetuski remained with Prince Koretski in Korets whither he came from Kiev and he is lying ill and unconscious," said Volodiyovski.

"And must we not go to him?" asked the Lithuanian.

"We should do no good there," answered Volodiyovski. "The prince's physician promises that he will get well; and Pan Sukhodolski, one of Prince Dominik's officers, and a great friend of Skshetuski's is there, and also our old Zatsvilikhovski; and they are both nursing him. He lacks nothing and it is all the better for him that he is delirious."

"Oh, almighty God," said the Lithuanian. "Did you see Pan Skshetuski with your own eyes."

"I saw him; but if they had not told me who it was, I should not have recognized him. Pain and sickness have so changed him."

"And did he recognize you?"

"Yes, indeed, he recognized me, although he said nothing; but he smiled and nodded his head. And it made me so sad that I could not stay any longer. Prince Koretski is coming here with his regiment to Zbaraj, and Zatsvilikhovski is coming with him and Pan Sukhodolski swears that he will also go with them, even though he should receive contrary orders from Prince Dominik. They want to bring Skshetuski here also if he can survive the journey."

"And whence did you get the news of the princess' death?" asked Pan Longin. "Have these knights brought it perhaps?" he added pointing to the princes.

"No, these knights learned it accidentally in Korets whither they had gone from Vilna with messages from the voyevoda; and now they have come here with me because they have letters from the voyevoda to our prince. War is certain. The commission of inquiry will have no results."

"We knew that also; but tell me, sir, who told you about the death of the princess?"

"Zatsvilikhovski told me and he heard it from Skshetuski. Khmyelnitski had given Skshetuski permission to search for her in Kiev, with the assistance of the Metropolitan. They sought her chiefly in the nunneries, for all of our people who remained in Kiev concealed themselves there. They thought, also, that Bohun had placed the princess in a convent. They searched and searched, and were quite cheerful although they knew that the 'blacks' had burned out twelve young girls in the convent of the good St. Nicholas. The Metropolitan, himself, was confident that no one would dare touch Bohun's beloved, until events proved otherwise."

"Then she was in the convent of the good St. Nicholas?"

"Yes. Skshetuski found in one convent Panna Yoakhima Yerlicha concealed and, as he asked everyone about the princess, he also asked her. She told him that all the maidens had been carried away by the Cossacks and twelve only had remained in the convent of St. Nicholas, which was afterwards burned. Princess Kurtsevich must have been among these. Skshetuski did not believe her at first, as she was a refugee and was half crazy from terror. So he went once more into the convent of the good Nicholas to seek her. Unfortunately, the nuns, three of whom had been suffocated, did not know her name; but, when they heard the description of Skshetuski's princess, they said that such a one had been there. Skshetuski at once left Kiev and fell ill."

"I am astonished that he is still alive."

"He certainly would have died, had it not been for that old Cossack who took care of him during his imprisonment in Sich and who brought us the letter from him, and on his return again helped him to search. This man had him taken to Korets and delivered him to Pan Zatsvilikhovski."

"May God preserve him, for he will never be comforted," said Longin.

Volodiyovski was silent and no one uttered a word. The princes sat with their elbows on the table with frowning foreheads, and perfectly motionless. Longin raised his eyes

heavenward. Zagloba fixed his glassy eye upon the opposite wall, as though he were sunk in deep thought.

"Wake up, sir," said Volodiyovski, presently, shaking him by the shoulder, "What are you thinking of? You cannot think up anything more and all your inventions lead to nothing."

"I know that," answered Zagloba in a broken voice. "I am only thinking that I am old and no longer of any use in this world."

CHAPTER XXI.

"Only think, sir," said Volodiyovski to Longin, a few days later, "that this man changed so in one hour that he seemed to be twenty years older. He was so joyous, so chatty, and full of life, that Ulysses himself could hardly compare with him. To-day, he hardly opens his mouth, but broods all day long; complaining about his age and talking as if he were in a dream. I knew that he loved her, but I did not dream that he was so fond of her."

"It is not to be wondered at," answered the Lithuanian, heaving a sigh. "He loves her all the more because he rescued her from Bohun's hands, and experienced so many dangers and adventures during his flight with her. Therefore, so long as there was hope, he kept up and exerted his ingenuity to save her. Now that there is actually nothing more for him to do in this world, he feels lonely. His heart has no object to which it can cling."

"I have already tried to get him to drink with me, in the hope that drink might restore his former vigor—but that is no good. He drinks, indeed, but does not think as he did formerly; never tells of his deeds, but becomes maudlin; his head sinks on his breast and he falls asleep. I do not know if Pan Skshetuski is any more desperate than he is."

"It is an unutterable pity, for he was a great knight. Let us go to him, Pan Michael. He liked to tease me and was always gnawing at me. Perhaps it will please him to do so now. My God! What may happen to a man! What a jolly fellow he was."

"Let us go," said Volodiyovski. "It is indeed pretty late, but at the worst it is only evening with him. He cannot sleep at night, as he sleeps all day."

As they conversed thus, they went to Zagloba's quarters, where they saw him sitting at the open window with his head leaning on his hand. It was late. Everything was still in the castle. The sentries alone called to one another in drawling tones and in the bushes which separated the castle

from the town, the nightingales filling the night with melody singing, sighing and trilling, in such quick succession that it was almost like a spring shower. Through the open window, the warm breath of May entered the room and the bright mooonlight shone on Zagloba's troubled face and bowed head.

"Good evening, sir," said the two knights.

"Good evening," answered Zagloba.

"What are you thinking of here at the window, instead of going to sleep?" asked Volodiyovski.

Zagloba sighed.

"I am not sleepy," he said slowly. "It is just a year since I fled from Bohun with her to the Kahamlik and these same little birds were trilling then just as they are now; and where is she now?"

"God has ordained it so," said Volodiyovski.

"Only tears and sorrow, Pan Michael, there is no longer any consolation for me."

They were silent. Only the song of the nightingales which filled the beautiful night came ever more clearly through the open window.

"Oh God, God!" sighed Zagloba. "Just as it was at Kahamlik."

Pan Longin shook a tear off his fair moustache, and the little knight said, after a pause:

"Eh! Do you know what, sir? Leave sorrow to its sorrow. Drink with us a cup of mead, for there is nothing better as a remedy for care. We will think of better times over our glasses."

"Let us drink," said Zagloba resignedly.

Volodiyovski ordered the servant to bring a candle and a flask of mead and, as he knew that the sight of the latter was enough to enliven Zagloba, he asked:

"Then it is a year now since you fled with the poor little one from Bohun in Rozloga?"

"It was in May, in May," answered Zagloba. "We passed through Kahamlik to fly to Zolotonosha. Oh! how sad life is!"

"And she was disguised?"

"As a Cossack. I had to cut off the poor girl's hair with my sword to complete the disguise. I know the very spot where I hid her tresses under a tree along with my sword."

"She was a sweet lady," said Longin sighing.

"I tell you that I loved her from the first day as though I had brought her up. And she only folded her little hands and thanked me for rescuing and protecting her. I wish they had cut me to pieces, rather than that I had lived to see this day. I wish I were dead!"

Again there was a silence. The three knights drank their mead mingled with tears, and then Zagloba continued:

"I thought to pass a peaceful old age near her and now . . . "

He let his hands fall helplessly.

"Where is there comfort but in the grave?"

But, before Zagloba had finished the last words, they heard a noise in the hall. Some one was trying to get in and the servant held him back. A loud argument arose and it seemed to Volodiyovski as though he recognized a well-known voice, and he called to the servant not to deny entrance. The door was opened and, in the doorway appeared the puffy-cheeked red face of Jendzian, who let his eyes wander over those present, bowed himself and said:

"Praised be Jesus Christ!"

"For ever and ever," answered Volodiyovski. "You are Jendzian?"

"That is my name," said the boy, "and I fall at your feet, sir. Where is my master?"

"Your master is lying very ill in Korets."

"Oh, for God's sake, what are you saying, gracious sir! And is he very sick? May God preserve him!"

"He was very sick, but now he is better. The doctor says he will get well."

"For I have come with news to my master about the young lady."

The little knight shook his head sadly.

"You hurried here for nothing, for Skshetuski knows about her death already; and we have been shedding burning tears on her account."

Jendzian's eyes nearly started from his head.

"Help! Help! What do I hear? The young lady is dead?"

"She did not die, but was murdered in Kiev."

"In what Kiev? What are you saying, good sir?"

"In what Kiev? As if you did not know Kiev!"

"In God's name, gracious sir, you are joking! What should she be doing in Kiev, when she was in the ravine near

the Valadynka not far from Rashkov. The witch had orders not to let her move one step from the ravine, until Bohun's return. As true as God lives! This is enough to drive one crazy."

"What kind of witch?" What are you talking about?"

"Well, Horpyna. I know the virago."

Zagloba suddenly sprang to his feet, and beat the air frantically with his hands; like one who is trying to save himself from drowning.

"By the Living God, be silent!' 'he said to Volodiyovski. "By God's wounds, let me question him!"

Those present were frightened, for Zagloba was deathly pale. His forehead was covered with sweat. He jumped over the bench towards Jendzian; and, seizing the boy by the shoulders, asked in a hoarse voice.

"Who told you that she . . . was concealed near Rashkov?"

"None other than Bohun."

"Boy, are you crazy!" bellowed Zagloba, shaking him like a pear-tree. "What Bohun?"

"For God's sake, why are you shaking me so, gracious sir," cried Jendzian, "let me alone, let me collect myself; otherwise you will turn my head. What Bohun! Does the gracious Pan not know him then?"

"Speak, or I will stab you!" cried Zagloba again. "Where did you see Bohun?"

"In Vlodava. What do you gentlemen want of me," cried the terrified boy. "Am I then a murderer? . . . "

Zagloba was almost beside himself. He gasped for breath and sank panting on the bench. Pan Michael ran to his assistance.

"When did you see Bohun?" he asked the boy.

"Three weeks ago."

"Then he is alive?"

"Why should he not be alive? He told me himself how the gracious Pan had wounded him, but he managed to get over it. . . "

"And he told you the young lady was near Rashkov?"

"Who else would have told me?"

"Listen, Jendzian. It is a question here of the life of your master and of the young lady. Did Bohun tell you himself, that she was not in Kiev?"

"No, gracious sir. How could she be in Kiev, when he

had concealed her near Rashkov, and forbidden Horpyna, on pain of death, to let her escape; and given me his ring and a safe-conduct, that I might ride to where she is; for his wounds had opened afresh and he is obliged to lie still, for I know not how long."

Jendzian's further speech was interrupted by Zagloba, who sprang up again; and, seizing with both hands the few remaining hairs on his head, began to scream like a madman.

"My little daughter is alive! By God's wounds, she lives! It was not she who was killed in Kiev; she lives, she lives, my beloved!"

And the old man, stamped his feet, laughed, sobbed and, finally, seized Jendzian's head and pressed it to his breast and kissed him so hard, that the boy almost lost his head.

"Let me be, good sir . . . I am almost choked. Of course she lives. If God is willing, we can go together to fetch her. Please sir, oh, that hurts good sir!"

"Let him go, sir, let him explain; we cannot understand everything," said Volodiyovski.

"Speak, speak!" cried Zagloba.

"Tell us all, from the beginning, little brother," said Longin, on whose moustache was a heavy dew.

"Allow me, sirs, to get my breath first and to shut the window, for those nightingales are singing so in the bushes that one cannot understand a single word."

"Mead!" cried Volodiyovski to the servant.

Jendzian, with the deliberation peculiar to himself, shut the window; then, turning to those present, he said: "Will the gentlemen allow me to sit down, for I am tired?"

"Sit down!" said Volodiyovski, pouring him out a glass of mead from the bottle which the servant had just brought in. "Drink with us, for you have deserved it for your news; but tell us quickly."

"This is good mead," said the boy, holding the glass to the light.

"May you be cut to pieces! Will you talk!" scolded Zagloba.

"Ah, the gracious Pan gets angry so quickly. I will talk if the gentlemen desire it, for my business is to obey; that is why I serve. But I see, already, that I must begin from the beginning and tell everything exactly."

"Begin at the beginning!"

"You remember, gentlemen, that when the news came of

the taking of Bar, we thought it was all up with the young lady. At that time, I returned to Jendziani, to my parents and to my grandfather, who is already—let's see—ninety, no ninety-one years old."

"Nine hundred so far as I am concerned," grumbled Zagloba.

"God grant that he may live as long as possible! I thank the kind gentleman for his good word," answered Jendzian. "Well, I went home to take my parents what I had, by God's help, collected among the banditti—for the gentlemen must know that the Cossacks had kept me in Chigrin the year before, for they took me for one of themselves; and I nursed the wounded Bohun while there and became very confidential with him. And from those robbers I got some silver and a few jewels."

"We know, we know," said Volodiyovski.

"Well, I came to my parents, who were very glad to see me, and could not believe their eyes when I shewed them all I had collected. I had to swear to my grandfather that I had gained it all honestly. At first they were particularly delighted; for, the gentlemen must know, they have a lawsuit with the Yavorski on account of a pear-tree, half of whose branches stretch over on the Yavorski land and half on ours. So, when the Yavorski shake the tree our pears also fall off and some fall on the boundary-line. They say that those on the boundary-line belong to them, and we . . . "

"Do not make me angry, fellow!" said Zagloba. "And talk of nothing but what concerns this affair."

"First, with your permission, good sir, I am no fellow; but a nobleman with a coat-of-arms, although I am poor; to which Pan Volodiyovski and Pan Longin, as friends of Pan Skshetuski, can testify. And, secondly, the lawsuit has been going on for fifty years. . . "

Zagloba closed his teeth tightly and undertook not to speak another word.

"Well, my little fish," said Longin sweetly, "but you must tell us about Bohun, not about pears."

"About Bohun?" said Jendzian. "Well, then, about Bohun. Well—Bohun thinks, sir, that he has no more faithful friend and servant than myself, although he almost cut me through the body in Chigrin. But I really watched and nursed him after the princes Kurtsevich had wounded him

so badly. I lied to him then, and said that I was sick of serving noblemen and would rather be with the Cossacks, because there was more to be gained with them; and he believed me. Why should he not believe me when I cured him? He grew very fond of me and to tell the truth he rewarded me generously; but, without knowing, of course, that I had made a vow to avenge myself for the insult I had received in Chigrin. The only reason I did not kill him for that was, that it did not seem fitting for a nobleman to stab a sick enemy in his bed as though he were a pig."

"Well, well," said Volodiyovski, "we know all about that. But how did you come across him this time?"

"Well, see here, sir, it was like this. When we had put the thumb screws on the Yavorski (they would have to go beg, there was no help for it) I thought to myself, 'well, now, it is time for me to look for Bohun and settle with him for what he did to me.' I told my parents my secret and also my grandfather, who, with his sense of chivalry, said to me, 'If you have sworn to do it, you must go, or you would be a fool.' I set out, therefore, for I also thought that if I found Bohun I might perhaps hear something about the young lady, whether she was alive; and I also thought that if I were to shoot him dead and bring my master the news, I should not go unrewarded."

"Certainly not, and we will reward you also," said Volodiyovski.

"And from me, little brother, you will get a horse and bridle," added Longin.

"I thank you, humbly, gracious sirs,' said the delighted boy. "It is true that one generally gives a reward in return for good news, and I never drink up what is given me. . . "

"The devil!" grunted Zagloba.

"Well, then, you rode away from home . . . " added Volodiyovski.

"Well, I rode away from home," continued Jendzian, "and I thought to myself, 'whither now? why not to Zbaraj, for Bohun is not far from there and I could find out about my master?' So I rode, good sir; I rode past Byala and Vlodava. When I reached Vlodava, the horses were rather tired and I stopped to feed them. It was fair time there, and all the inns were full of noblemen. I went to the citizens' houses, they were also full of noblemen. Then a Jew told me I could have had a room with him, but a wounded nobleman

had just taken it. 'That's just the thing' I said, for I understand bandaging, and your barber-surgeon is probably so busy during fair time that he has not time to turn round. The Jew told me that the nobleman attended to himself and would not allow anyone into his room; but he went to ask him. The fellow inside must have been feeling pretty sick, for he let me enter. I stepped into the room and, who should I see there, lying in bed, but—Bohun! I crossed myself, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; I was so dreadfully frightened. And he recognized me at once, and was perfectly delighted to see me (for he thought I was his friend) and said 'God has sent thee to me; now I shall not die.' And I said, 'what brought you here, gracious sir?' But he put his finger on his lips and it was not till later that he told me of his adventure; how Khmyelnitski had sent him to His Majesty the King in Zamost, and how Lieutenant Volodiyovski had done for him in Lipki."

"Did he think of me with affection?" asked the little knight.

"I must say, gracious sir, that he spoke very kindly, 'I thought,' said he, 'that he was scrapings, a mongrel; but he is a fighter of the first class, and almost cut me in two,' but he speaks worse than ever of Pan Zagloba. He grinds his teeth with rage to think that Pan Zagloba dragged him into that fight."

"The hangman take him! I am not afraid of him now," said Zagloba.

"We soon got back to our old confidential footing," continued Jendzian, "or even more confidential. He told me everything; how near he had come to dying; how they had taken him for a nobleman and, consequently, had taken him in at the country house at Lipki, and that he had given his name as Pan Hulevich from Podolia, how they had cured him and had treated him with the greatest kindness, and that he had made a vow of gratitude to them till his dying day."

"And what was he doing in Vlodava?"

"He was on his way to Volhynia but in Parcelva his wounds opened again, for his carriage had overturned. He had to remain behind, therefore; although he was very much afraid to do so, as he might be discovered and killed. He told me this himself. 'I was sent out with letters,' he said 'but now I have no credentials, only the safe-conduct; and if they should discover who I am, not only the nobles would hack

me to pieces, but that charming colonel would have me strung up without asking permission.' I remember that when he said that to me I answered 'I am glad to know that any arbitrary colonel may string one up' and he asked 'Why is that?' I said, 'So that I may be careful and not tell anything I know—and I am telling you this for yourself, sir.' Then, he began to thank me and to assure me of his gratitude and also that he would not fail to reward me. 'I have no money just now' he said 'but whatever jewels I have shall be yours; and, later on, I will shower you with gold, but do me one favor.' "

"Ah, now we are getting to the princess," said Volodiyovski.

"You are right, sir. I must tell everything in order. When he told me then that he no money, I lost all compassion for him and thought to myself, 'wait awhile, I will serve you!' And he said 'I am sick, I have no strength to travel, and a long and dangerous road is ahead of me. If could only get to Volhynia—and that is not far, I should be with my own people. But, yonder, along the Dniester, I cannot travel; for I am not strong enough. And, besides, one has to go through the enemy's country, castles and troops—you go in my place.' I asked him, 'And whither?' He answered 'To the vicinity of Rashkov, for she is hidden there with Donyet's sister, Horpyna, the witch.' I said, 'the princess?' 'Yes,' he answered, 'she is concealed so that no human eye can discover her; but she fares well and sleeps on gold brocade, like the Princess Vishnyovyetski.' "

"Speak faster, for God's sake!" cried Zagloba.

"What is sudden is of the Devil," answered Jendzian. "Well, when I heard that, gracious sirs, I rejoiced greatly, but I did not show it and said, 'And is she really ther ? It must be a long time since you took here there.' He began to assure me that Horpyna was his faithful wench, and would keep her there, if necessary, ten years until he should return; and that the princess was truly there, as true as that God is in heaven, and that neither Poles, nor Tartars, nor Cossacks could come near her and that Horpyna would obey his commands."

As Jendzian was telling this, Pan Zagloba shook as with a chill, the little knight nodded his head in satisfaction, and Podbipyenta looked up to heaven.

"It is quite certain that she is there," continued the boy,

"and the best proof of it is that he sent me to her. But I restrained myself at first, that he might notice nothing, and said: 'But why should I go there?' He answered, 'Because I cannot go. If,' he said, 'I escape with my life from Vlodava and reach Volhynia I will have myself carried to Kiev, for our Cossacks are all over that country. And you,' he said, 'ride and command Horpyna to drive the princess thither and place her in the convent of the Holy Virgin.' ""

"What then she did not go to the convent of Saint Nicholas?" broke in Zagloba. "I said at once that Yerlicha was crazy or was telling a lie."

"To the convent of the Holy Virgin," repeated Jendzian. " 'I will give you this ring,' he said, 'and a safe-conduct and the knife—and Horpyna will know what that means, for we arranged it. And another proof that you are sent me by God,' he said, 'is that she knows you and knows that you are my best friend. Go at once to her; and do not fear the Cossacks; but beware of the Tartars. Wherever you hear of any, avoid them, for they do not respect the safe-conduct. In a certain spot in the ravine, there is money buried, ducats; take it with you in any case. On the way you can say it is Bohun's wife—and you will want for nothing. Besides,' he said, 'the witch will know what to do as soon as you come from me; for whom can I send, unhappy man that I am, whom can I trust in a strange land, among enemies?' . . Well, sirs, he begged me, amidst a torrent of tears, and, finally, I allowed the beast to make me swear that I would go. I swore, right enough, but added, in my mind, with my lord!' He was quite happy, then, and gave me the safe-conduct, the ring, and the knife and all the jewels he had with him. I took them, for I thought they would be safer with me than with a marauder. At parting, he told me which ravine it was near the Valadynka, how I must ride, and in what direction I must turn; all so exactly that I could have found my way there blindfolded. And the gentlemen will see that I am speaking the truth if they, as I think, will set out at once."

"Directly, to-morrow!" said Volodiyovski.

"What, to-morrow! To-day, by daybreak, the horses will be saddled."

Joy took possession of all hearts and was expressed in words of gratitude to heaven, in joyful rubbing of hands, and in ever fresh questionings of Jendzian; to which Jendzian answered with his accustomed self-possession.

"May the balls strike you!" cried Zagloba. "What a servant Skshetuski has in you!"

"How so?" asked Jendzian.

"He will cover you with gold."

"I think that I have deserved something, although I served my master faithfully without any reward."

"And what did you do with Bohun?" asked Volodiyovski.

"That was just what bothered me, gracious sirs, that he was ill again and I could not stab him; for my master would have scolded me. That is fate, what could I do? See here, when he had already told me everything that I was to say and had given me what he had to give, I reflected, 'Why,' said I to myself, 'should such a knave, who has kept the princess prisoner and who cut me down in Chigrin, be permitted to go free in the world. The hangman take him! It would be better if he were not in the world.' And then I thought that he might get well and ride after me with the Cossacks. But I set out, without reflecting any longer, to find Colonel Rogovski, who is stationed with the regiment in Vlodava and informed him that this man was Bohun, the worst rebel of all. By this time they must have hanged him."

As he said this, Jendzian laughed foolishly and looked round him as though he expected the others to follow his example; but was much astonished at receiving no response.

Not for some minutes did Zagloba growl: "That is of no consequence." Volodiyovski, however, sat quite still, and Longin clacked his tongue, shook his head and said finally:

"That was not a nice thing to do, little brother, as one says, not nice."

"How so, gracious sir?" asked Jendzian in astonishment. "Would it have been better for me to stab him?"

"That would not have been nice either, not at all; but I do not know if it is not better to be a murderer than a Judas."

"What are you saying, sir? Did Judas betray a rebel? This man is the worst enemy of the king and of the whole Commonwealth."

"That may be, but all the same, it was not nice. And what was the name of that colonel, speak."

"Rogovski, they said his first name was Jacob."

"It is the same," murmured the Lithuanian, Pan Lashch's relative, Skshetuski's enemy."

But no one heard this remark, for Zagloba began to speak.

"Gentlemen," he said, "this matter will bear no delay.

God, through this boy, has ordained and arranged everything, so that we may seek the princess now, under better conditions than ever, God be praised! To-morrow we must set out. The prince, indeed, is not here, but we will undertake the journey without leave; for we have no time to waste. Pan Volodiyovski will go, and Jendzian and I will accompany him; and you, Pan Podbipyenta had better stay here, for your size and your simplicity might betray us."

"No, brother, I will go too," said the Lithuanian.

"For the sake of her safety, you must remain here. Whoever has once seen you never forgets you during his lifetime. We have a safe-conduct, it is true; but, even with the safe-conduct they would not trust you. You killed Pulyan before the eyes of the whole rebel mob, and if such a beanpole should appear among them, they would recognize it again. It must not be, you cannot go with us, you will not find your three heads there, and your own head is of not much use. It were better to remain here than to imperil the undertaking."

"I am sorry," said the Lithuanian.

"Sorry, or not sorry, you must remain here. If we ever go birdsnesting, we will take you with us; but not now."

"That does not sound nice."

"Give me your snout, for my heart is very joyful; but remain here. Only one thing more, sirs, a matter of the greatest importance; keep the secret, that it may not reach the soldiers and, through them, the people; say not a word to anyone"

"Bah! And the prince?"

"The prince is not here."

"And Pan Skshetuski, if he returns?"

"Not a word to him above all; he would immediately follow us. He will have plenty of time for happiness, and God preserve him from a fresh disappointment; he would lose his reason. On your word of honor, gentlemen, not a syllable about this matter."

"On the word of a knight," said Podbiyenta.

"On our word! on our word!"

"And, now, let us thank God!"

Zagloba first knelt down, the others followed his example, and they prayed long and earnestly.

CHAPTER XXII.

The prince had, several days before this, actually ridden to Zamost to enlist new regiments. He was not expected to return just yet, so Volodiyovski, Zagloba, and Jendzian set out in absolute silence, not betraying their secret to anyone. And of all those that remained in Zbaraj, Longin was the only one who knew it. But in accordance with his knightly word, he was silent as though bewitched.

Vyershul and the other officers who knew of the death of the princess, did not suspect that the journey of Zagloba and the little knight had anything to do with the betrothed of the unfortunate Skshetuski; but believed that the two friends were riding to visit him himself, especially as Jendzian was with them and they all knew that he was Skshetuski's servant.

The friends went directly to Khlebanovka, to make their preparations there for their journey.

The first thing Zagloba did was to buy, with money that he had borrowed from Longin, five strong Podolian horses, fit to stand long journeys; such as were used by the Polish cavalry and the Cossack captains. Such a horse could chase a Tartar pony the whole day long, and was even more swift than the Turkish horses; and was to be preferred to them on account of his greater endurance in changes of weather, cold nights and rain. So Zagloba bought five such steeds and, besides, he bought for himself, his companions, and also for the princess, costly Cossack garments. Jendzian busied himself with the horses' harness; and, as soon as everything was thought of and in readiness, they set out on their way, commending their undertaking to God and Saint Nicholas, the patron of virgins.

Disguised as they were, they might easily have been taken for Cossack atamans, and it often occurred that they were stopped by soldiers from the Polish quarters, and by the Polish watches, until they got some distance beyond Kamenets. But Zagloba soon set himself right with these. For

some time, they rode through a safe country, which was occupied by the regiments of Lantskorontski, who kept drawing nearer to Bar in order to keep his eye on the Cossack companies who were collecting there. It was already generally known that no negotiations would take place, and war hung over the land; although the principal powers had not yet made a move. The truce of Pereyaslav would not come to an end at Whitsuntide; the skirmishes between the companies of scouts had never ceased, and became daily more serious. Each side was only waiting for the battle-cry. Meanwhile, spring was advancing in the steppes; the trampled and downtrodden earth was once more covered with the carpet of grass and blossoms, which had grown up from the bodies of the fallen knights. The larks soared in the air above the battle-fields. Flocks of birds mounted, screaming, into the clouds. The frozen waters once more gathered and formed a gleaming scaly coat of mail beneath the warm breath of the wind, and, in the evening, frogs splashed in the water and carried on their joyful dialogues until late at night.

It seemed as though Nature, herself, desired to heal the wounds; to still the sorrows; and to conceal with flowers the grave-mounds of the war. Light shone in heaven and on the earth. The whole steppes, fresh, joyous, and full of life, gleamed like a glorious picture, and shimmered in all colors of the rainbow, like a gold brocade, or like a wide Polish girdle, upon which all the colors have been embroidered in harmonious relation to each other. The steppes were joyous with the song of birds; and a wide wave of warm air streamed across them, drying the moist places and browning the faces of men.

At such a time, every heart is full of joy, and a boundless sense of confidence fills all breasts. It was thus with our knights, who looked into the future with happy confidence. Volodiyovski sang incessantly. Zagloba stretched himself out on his horse and offered his back with full enjoyment to the warm rays of the sun; and, when he was thoroughly warmed through, he said to the little knight:

"I feel so well; for to tell the truth, next to mead and Hungarian wine, there is nothing better for old joints, than the sun."

"It is good for everything," answered Volodiyovski, "for even the animals love to warm themselves in the sun."

"It is fortunate that we are travelling just at this time to

the princess," continued Zagloba, "it would have been hard to travel with her in winter, in the frost."

"If we only once get her into our hands, I am a rogue if she ever escapes me again."

"I must tell you, Pan Michael," said Zagloba, "that I fear only one thing; and, that is, that if the war should break out, the Tartars would flood the country and attack us. But I do not fear the Cossacks. We shall not need to explain ourselves to the Cossacks; for you have noticed have you not, that they take us for leaders. The Zaporojians honor the safe-conduct, and Bohun's name is our protection."

"I know the Tartars, for, among the gentlemen in Lubni, our life passed in incessant skirmishes with them. Vyershul and I never had any rest on account of them," said Pan Michael.

"I know them too," said Zagloba. "I have told you, before now, that I passed many years among them, and might have attained rank and dignity in their midst; but, as I did not wish to become a heathen, I had to throw over everything, for they were about to make me die the death of a martyr, because I tried to convert their oldest priest to the only saving faith."

"You told us once, sir, that you were in Galatz."

"That is a matter by itself, and also that I was in the Crimea. But, if you think that the world ends with Galatz, you do not know where pepper grows. There are more sons of Beliel than Christians in that country."

Jendzian here joined in the conversation.

"It is not only from the Tartars that we must apprehend danger," he said, "I have not yet told the gentlemen what Bohun told me that the glen was guarded by frightful monsters. The giantess herself, who guards the princess, is a witch, in compact with the devil; and who can tell if she may not have received warning of our approach. I have a bullet, it is true, which I cast above some consecrated bread, which will break everything that strikes it; but she has, besides, whole regiments of ghosts and vampires guarding the entrance. The gentlemen must vouch with their lives that no evil shall happen to me, for otherwise I should lose my reward."

"You great dunce," said Zagloba; "as if we had nothing to do but to think of your life. The devil will not wring your neck; but, if he should do so, it would not matter, for you

would have deserved it by your avarice. I am too old a sparrow to be caught with chaff. And, mark this, if Horpyna is a witch, I am a still more mighty wizard; for I learned the black art in Persia. She serves the devils, but the devils serve me. I can plough with them as with oxen if I wish it, but I have my soul's salvation to think of."

"That is right, gracious sir; but, for this once, make use of your power, for it is always better to be on the safe side."

"And I," said Volodiyovski, "have more confidence in our good cause and in God's protection. May the devils watch over Bohun and Horpyna; but with us are the Heavenly Hosts, whom the mightiest powers of Hell cannot resist. For this occasion, I will sacrifice seven candles of white wax to the Holy Archangel Michael."

"I will add one more," said Jendzian, "so that Pan Zagloba may not frighten me with perdition."

"I will be the first to send you to Hell," answered the nobleman, "if it should prove that you do not know the exact spot."

"How should I not know it? As soon as we get to the Valadynka, I can find the glen with my eyes blindfolded. We must ride along the bank towards the Dniester and the glen is to our right, we shall recognize it because the entrance is blocked by a rock. At first sight, it appears as though one could not enter; but there is a cleft in the rock, through which two horses can ride abreast. If we once get there, no one can escape us, for it is the only exit from the glen; and all around are such high walls of rock than even a bird can scarcely fly over them. The witch kills people who try to enter the glen without permission. There are many skeletons there; but Bohun told me not to mind that, but to keep on riding and calling Bohun! Bohun! . . . Then, only, will she receive us as friends. Besides Horpyna, there is Cheremis who is a good archer. We must kill them both."

"I agree with you as to Cheremis but the woman—we will bind her."

"If the gracious gentlemen could only do it! She is so strong that she tears a coat of armor as if it were a shirt and crushes a horseshoe in her hand. Podbipyenta is the only one who might conquer her, but not we. Let be, sir, I have a charmed bullet for her—may it bring the last hour to this devil woman; otherwise she might follow us

like a she-wolf and howl till all the Cossacks awoke; and then we should not only be unable to save the young lady, but also our own heads."

Amid such conversations and counsels, the journey passed. They hurried forward through towns, settlements, farms, and grave-mounds. Their way led past Yarmolints towards Bar where they first turned off in the direction of Yampol and towards the Dniester. They came through the region where Volodiyovski had once wounded Bohun and delivered Pan Zagloba from his hands; they found the very same farm-house and remained there over night. Sometimes, they had to take up their quarters for the night in the open air on the steppes; and then Zagloba would vary the monotony and the silence by relating his former adventures, some that he had really experienced and others that had no existence. But the conversation turned chiefly on the princess, her imprisonment with the witch and the rescue that was awaiting her.

When they had finally left behind them the territory that was under the care of Lantskoronski's soldiers, they came into the territory of the Cossacks, in which not a single Pole was left alive. Those who had not fled, had been destroyed with fire and sword. May had come to an end and it was now the warm month of June; but they had hardly travelled a third of their journey for the road was long and full of difficulties. Fortunately, they anticipated no danger from the Cossacks; they had no difficulty with the wandering bands who took them for Zaporojian chiefs; nevertheless, they were asked who they were from time to time, and then Zagloba, if the interrogator were a Nijov would show Bohun's safe-conduct. But if he were an ordinary "black," he did not dismount, but kicked him in the chest with his foot so that he fell on the ground. The others who saw this, at once gave them a free passage; for they believed that they were not only friends, but persons of high position, since they beat them. "Perhaps it is Kshyvonos Burlay or even Khmyelnitski, the little father himself," they would say.

The only thing that annoyed Zagloba was the fact of Bohun's fame; for the incessant questions about him were very tiresome and also delayed them, as they were usually detained some time while answering them. Would the questions never cease? 'Did he live? was he well?' For the news of his death had reached Yahorlik and beyond the rapids.

And when the travellers answered that he was well and in freedom and that they were his messengers, they were kissed and entertained hospitably. All hearts and, even all purses, were opened to them; which Skshetuski's cunning servant did not fail to turn to his own advantage.

In Yampol, Burlay received them. He had come here with his Nij soldiers and the "blacks" to wait for the Budziak Tartars. He was an old and famous commander, who had instructed Bohun, years before in military matters; had accompanied him in his expeditions to the Black Sea, and, together with him, set fire to Sinope. He, therefore, loved him like a son and received his messengers without the slightest mistrust, especially as he had seen Jendzian with him the previous year; and, when he learned that Bohun was alive and was going to Volhynia, he gave the messengers a feast to show his joy, and got quite drunk. Zagloba feared that Jendzian, who was also slightly drunk, might let out their secret; but the foxy young rascal knew enough to tell the truth only when it was advisable, without endangering their expedition; and thus he gained their full confidence. The two knights were amused at this wonderful conversation of Jendzian's; especially as during the whole time, their names were continually repeated by him, with a most obstinate rashness.

"We heard," said Burlay, "that Bohun was wounded in a duel; do you know who fought him?"

"Volodiyovski, an officer of Prince Yeremy's," answered Jendzian quietly.

"Oh, if he could only fall into my hands, I would pay him out for our falcon; I would flay him!"

Volodiyovski twitched his yellow moustache and looked at Burlay, as a hound looks at the wolf at whose throat he dare not spring.

Jendzian continued, "That is just why I am telling you his name, colonel."

"The devil will enjoy getting hold of that boy," thought Zagloba.

"But," contiued Jendzian, "he is not so much to blame; for Bohun challenged him, himself, without knowing with whom he had to deal. There was another nobleman there, Bohun's greatest enemy; who hand once already rescued the princess from his hands."

"And who was that?"

"An old sot, who attached himself to our ataman in Chigrin and pretended friendship for him."

"He will be hanged!" cried Burlay.

"May I be called a fool, if I do not cut off that fellow's ear," murmured Zagloba.

"They wounded him so," continued Jendzian, "that, had it been anyone else, the crows would long since have pecked at him. But our ataman has a soul of steel; he will get well, although he could hardly drag himself to Vlodava and would have been at his wits' end if we had not arrived. We took him to Volhynia where our men have the upper hand and he sent us alone to the lady."

"Those black-eyed wenches are his destruction," cried Burlay. "I told him that long ago. Would it not have been better to have taken the girl in the Cossack fashion, and then have tied a stone round her neck and thrown her into the water, as we did at the Black Sea?"

Volodiyovski could hardly contain himself, so indignant was he at the insult to the fair sex. Zagloba, however, laughed and said:

"Yes, indeed it would have been better."

"But you are good friends of his," said Burlay. "You did not forsake him in his need. And you, young fellow," turning to Jendzian, "you are the best of all; for I saw you in Chigrin, when you were nursing and watching our falcon. Well, I am your friend also. What do you wish, soldiers or horses? I will give them to you so that no accident may happen to you on your homeward journey."

"We have no need of Cossacks, Colonel," said Zagloba, "for we are riding as friends in a friendly land; and may God preserve us from any accident. We can get along better alone than with a great number, but we should like some swift horses."

"I will give you some that cannot be overtaken by any of the Khan's Arab steeds."

Jendzian once more seized the favorable opportunity.

"The ataman gave us very little money as he had not much himself; and, after we leave Bratslav, oats are worth a dollar a peck."

"Come with me to my room," said Burlay.

Jendzian did not need a second invitation and disappeared with the old colonel, behind the door. When he again made his appearance, his chubby face beamed with delight and

his gray coat was considerably puffed out around the waist.

"Now God be with you on your journey," said the old colonel; "and, when you have got the girl, come and see me again, for I want to see Bohun's little bird."

"We cannot do that, Colonel," answered the boy, boldly, "for this little Polish lady is very timid and actually tried to kill herself once with a knife. We fear that some harm may happen to her. Let the ataman do as he pleases with her."

"He will, he will; she will not be afraid of him. She is a white-handed Pole! And the Cossack stinks in her nostrils!" growled Burlay. "Go, and God be with you; you have not much farther to travel."

It was not far from Yampol to Valadynka but the road was difficult, or, rather, there was no road. The land stretched away endlessly before our riders, without any path; for in those days this region was yet a wilderness, only built up and settled in places. Therefore, on leaving Yampol, they turned westward, moving away from the Dniester in order to follow the river Valadynka in its course to Rashkov; for only in this way could they find the glen. Morning was breaking in the east, for Burlay's supper had lasted till quite late in the night; and Zagloba calculated that they could not reach the glen before sunset. But that suited him, as, after freeing Helena, he wished to have the night before him. Meanwhile, the friends conversed as they rode, and rejoiced that fortune had favored them so far; and Pan Zagloba, remembering the supper with Burlay, said:

"Just see how these Cossacks who belong to the brotherhood stand up for each other in all dangers! I am not speaking of the rabble, whom the Cossacks despise; and who, if the devil help them to get the upper hand, will make far worse masters; but of the brotherhood itself. One stands up for another, they are ready to go through fire for one another, and do not act as the nobles do."

"Eh, what? gracious sir," answered Jendzian. "I was among them for some time, and saw how they devoured each other like wolves; and if it were not for Khmyelnitski, who keeps them in check, partly by his strong will and partly by concesssions, they would have utterly eaten up one another. But this Burlay is a great warrior among them and Khmyelniski, himself, honors him highly."

"And you, evidently, seem to be in great favor with him,

as he allows you to plunder him. Ah, Jendzian, Jendzian, you will come to a bad end."

"What is written cannot be avoided, gracious sir. Is it not a praiseworthy act and agreeable to God to lead your enemy into a trap?"

"I am not blaming you for that, but for your avarice, this passion of the peasantry, which is quite unworthy of a nobleman, and on account of which you wil be condemned."

"I do not grudge a candle to the Church if I succeed in earning something, that the Lord God may make use of me and may continue to bless me. And that I support my parents, is surely no sin."

"What a rogue on four feet it is!" cried Zagloba, turning to Volodiyovski. "I thought that all cunning would go to the grave with me; but I see that he is a still greater rascal. Through his craftiness, we shall free the princess from Bohun's imprisonment, with Bohun's own permission and with Burlay's horses. Did you ever hear anything like it? And I wouldn't give three mites for him."

Jendzian smiled contentedly and answered:

"Are we any the worse off, gracious sir."

"I like you; and, if you were not so avaricious, I should like to take you into my service. But, as you hoodwinked Burlay, I will even forgive you for calling me a sot."

"I did not call you so, gracious sir, it was Bohun."

"God has punished him for it," answered Zagloba.

Thus chatting, they passed the morning; but when the sun had reached the meridian, they became serious, for in a few hours they would see Valadynka. After a long journey, they were near their goal, and an uneasiness natural on such occasions stole into their hearts. Was Helena yet alive? And, if she were alive, would they find her in the ravine? Horpyna might have taken her away, or, at the last moment, have hidden her in some unknown cleft in the rocks, or have killed her. The impediments were not all overcome, the dangers not all conquered. They had indeed credentials by which Horpyna was to recognize them as Bohun's emissaries; but how would it be if she had been warned by devils or ghosts. Jendzian was the most apprehensive of this and even Pan Zagloba feared it; and, although he was so confident in his own knowledge of the black art, he could not think about it without uneasiness. If this were the case, they would find the ravine empty; or, perhaps even worse,

they might find the Cossacks from Rashkov in ambush. Their hearts beat louder and when after several hours ride, from a rising ground at the border of the ravine they saw in the distance a gleam of water like a silver ribbon, Jendzian's chubby face grew somewhat pale.

"That is Valadynka," he said, in a hushed voice.

"Already!" asked Zagloba, in an equally muffled voice, "how near it is . . . "

"May God protect us!" answered Jendzian. "My gracious sir, begin your incantations at once, for I am dreadfully frightened."

"Incantations are foolishness! We will bless the river and the cells that will be of better help."

Volodiyovski was the least disturbed, but he was silent. He only looked carefully at his pistols, loaded them with fresh powder, and saw that his sword could be unsheathed without difficulty.

"I have a consecrated bullet here, in this pistol," said Jendzian. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! Forward! Forward!"

Before long, they found themselves on the bank of the little river, and turned thir horses' heads in the direction of its course. Volodiyovski stopped a moment, and said:

"Let Jendzian take the safe conduct; for the witch knows him, and he can talk to her first, so that she will not be afraid when she sees us and go and hide herself with the princess in some cleft in the rocks."

"I will not go first, no matter what you say, gentlemen," said Jendzian.

"Well, then, ride in the rear, you blockhead."

Then, Volodiyovski rode forward, followed by Zagloba; Jendzian, with the extra horses, bringing up the rear, and looking anxiously about him on all sides. The horses' hoofs clattered on the stones; the stillness of a desert reigned in this place, which was only broken by the chirping of crickets and grasshoppers who were hidden in the rocks, for the day was warm although the sun was already long past the meridian. The horsemen had finally reached a round elevation, which looked like a knight's shield turned over, upon which broken rocks, weather beaten by the sun and air, were scattered like ruins of houses and church towers. It looked as though it was the ruins of a nobleman's castle or a town that had been but yesterday destroyed by the enemy.

Jendzian looked at it and rode up to Zagloba.

"That is the boundary line," said he. "I recognize it by what Bohun told me of it. No one who crosses this at night survives to tell the tale."

"If one cannot pass it by, perhaps one can pass across it," answered Zagloba. "Bah! this is a strange, accursed land; but at least we are on the right road."

"It is not much farther," said Jendzian.

"God be praised," answered Zagloba, and his thoughts turned to the princess.

His courage revived wonderfully at the sight of the wild banks of the Valadynka, of this desert and its silence. It seemed incredible that the princess should be so near; she, for whom he had undertaken so many adventures and passed through so many dangers; she, whom he so loved that, when the news of her death came to him, he no longer knew how he should live out the rest of his days. But on the other hand one becomes habituated even to misfortune. Zagloba had so long been filled with the conviction that she had been stolen and was far away in Bohun's power, that now he hardly dared to say: 'Behold, now sadness and searching have come to an end, the time of peace and happiness is here.' But, other questions forced themselves upon him. What would she say when she saw him? For this rescue from such a long and wearisome imprisonment would surprise her, like a flash of lightning . . . "God's ways are wonderful," thought Zagloba; "He understands how to direct everything so that virtue shall conquer and injustice shall be put to shame. It was God who first sent Jendzian into Bohun's hands and then made him his friend. It was God who directed that the cruel mother, war, should call the wild ataman from this desert where, like a wolf, he had carried his prey. God, who later gave him into Volodiyovski's hands and led Jendzian to him once more. And so He has so directed everything that now, when Helena is perhaps giving up her last ray of hope and no longer expects assistance, at this very time rescue is at hand.

"Thy tears will cease to flow, my little daughter," thought Zagloba, "and soon thou wilt be overcome with joy. And oh, how thankful she will be, how she will fold her little hands and be thankful!"

Here, Zagloba saw the girl in his mind's eye; and he was filled with emotion and became buried in thought about what was to happen in the next hour.

Jendzian pulled his sleeve from behind.

"Gracious sir!"

"What is the matter?" asked Zagloba, annoyed that the thread of his thoughts had been broken.

"Did you not see, sir?"

"What? Was it only a wolf! Kiss him on the nose."

At this moment Volodiyovski reined in his horse.

"Have we not missed the road?" he asked. "It ought to be here."

"No," answered Jendzian, "we will ride as Bohun said. "I wish to God it were all over."

"If we are on the right road, it will soon be over."

"I want to ask the gentlemen to look at Cheremis, when they are talking to the witch. He must be a hideous creature. But he can shoot splendidly."

"Do not be afraid—go forward!"

They had not ridden many paces when the horses began to snort and to lay back their ears. Jendzian grew as cold as a lizard, for he expected at every moment to hear the howling of a vampire from the clefts in the rocks, or to see some fearful form start up before him; but it turned out presently that the horses were only snorting because they had passed close by the place where the wolf stood, who had frightened the boy a few moments before. The air was perfectly still, not even the crickets chirped, and the sun had almost set. Jendzian crossed himself and became calm.

Suddenly Volodiyovski pulled in his horse.

"I see the glen. Its entrance is hidden by a rock and there is a breach in the rock.'

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! There it is," whispered Jendzian.

"Follow me!" cried Pan Michael, turning his horse.

Before long, they stood at the breach in the rock and rode through it, as into a stone vault. A deep glen lay open before them, the sides of which were thickly overgrown, and spread out in the distance into a wide semicircular level surrounded by gigantic walls of rock.

Jendzian began to cry at the top of his voice.

"Bo—hun! Bo—hun! come here, witch, come, Bo—hun! Bo—hun!"

They stopped their horses and waited in silence. Presently the boy called again:

"Bo—hun! Bo—hun! . . . "

The barking of dogs was heard in the distance.

"Bo—hun! Bo—hun!"

On the left of the glen on which the red beams of the setting sun were falling there was a rustling in the thick bushes of wild plum and hawthorn; and, following upon it, appeared at the extreme summit of the precipice, a human form, which bending over, with her hand screening her eyes, was looking attentively at the new arrivals.

"That is Horpyna," said Jendzian; and, placing his hand to his mouth, he cried again "Bo—hun! Bo—hun!"

Horpyna began to descend, bending her body backwards to preserve her equilibrium. She came down rapidly and, behind her, came plunging a little undersized man with a long Turkish gun in his hand. The bushes cracked under the heavy feet of the witch, the stones rolled clattering to the bottom of the glen, and, in the red evening sunlight, with her body bent backwards, she looked like a gigantic, unearthly being.

"Who are you?" she said, in a loud voice, when she reached the bottom.

"How are you, lass?" said Jendzian, who, at the sight of beings who were not ghosts, had regained his self-possession.

"You are one of Bohun's servants, I recognize you, you little fellow. And those over there, who are they?"

"Bohun's friends."

"A pretty witch!" murmured Pan Michael to himself.

"And why have you come here?"

"Here are the safe-conduct, the knife, and the ring. Do you know what that signifies?"

The giantess took the tokens in her hand and looked at them closely; then she said:

"They are the same! you want the princess?"

"We do; is she well?"

"She is well. Why did not Bohun come himself?"

"Bohun is wounded."

"Wounded? I saw it in the mill."

"If you saw it, why do you ask? You lie, girl!" said Jendzian, with confidence.

The witch laughed and showed her white wolf's teeth; and, clenching her fist, she gave Jendzian a dig in the ribs.

"You little fellow, you."

"Be off with you."

"Will you not kiss me? And when do you want to take the princess?"

"Immediately. But we must rest the horses."

"Well, take her, I will go with you."

"And why do you want to go?"

"My brother is destined to die; he is going to be impaled by the Poles; I will go with you."

Jendzian bent over in his saddle, as though he would converse more privately with the giantess, while his hand, unobserved sought the butt of his pistol.

"Cheremis! Cheremis!" he said, in order to direct the attention of his companions to the dwarf.

"Why do you call him, his tongue has been cut out."

"I am not calling him, I am only astonished at his beauty. You would not leave him; he is your husband."

"He is my dog."

"There are only two of you in the glen?"

"Only two—and the princess."

"That is well, you will not go with us."

"But I will go, I say."

"And I say you will stay here."

In the boy's tone, there was something so peculiar that the giantess became uneasy and turned round; she had become mistrustful.

"What do you want?" she said.

"That is what I want," answered Jendzian, firing his pistol at her breast, and she was so close that the smoke enveloped them both in a moment. Horpyna stepped back with outstretched arms, her eyes started from their sockets, an unearthly cry escaped from her throat, she staggered and fell backwards her whole length on the ground. At the same moment, Zagloba gave Cheremis a blow with his sword; so that the skull cracked under the blade. The monstrous dwarf uttered not a sound, but rolled himself together like a worm, twitching, and opening and shutting his hands alternately, like the claws of a dying lynx.

Zagloba wiped his reeking sword with the sleeve of his coat. Jendzian sprang from his horse, seized a huge stone and threw it upon Horpyna's broad chest and then began to look for something in his breast pocket.

The gigantic form of the witch was still striking the earth with its feet, her face twitched convulsively, the white teeth were covered with a bloody foam, and, from her throat, came a muffled gurgle. Meanwhile, the boy pulled out a piece of consecrated chalk and with it traced the sign of the cross on the stone and said:

"Now, she will never get up again."

Then he sprang into the saddle.

"Forward!" commanded Volodiyovski. They flew along the brook like a whirlwind, and came to a halt in the middle of the glen. They passed several scattered oaks and presently there appeared before their eyes a cabin and a tall mill, whose dripping wheel glistened like a red star in the rays of the sun. Two huge black dogs were fastened by ropes outside the cabin. They tried to spring at the newcomers, and tugged at their opes with howls of rage. Volodiyovski was ahead and arrived first. He sprang to the ground and, stepping to the door of the house, opened it, and entered the hall, his sword clattering at his side.

At the right of the hall, could be seen an open door leading into a large room with a fireplace in the middle, filled with chips of wood, and smoking fiercely. The door at the left was closed. "She must be in there," thought Pan Michael, springing to open it.

He shook the door, opened it, was about to dash into the room, but remained on the threshold as if petrified.

At the farther end of the room, with her hand upon the head of her couch, stood Helena Kurtsevich, pale, with her hair falling over her shoulders; her terrified eyes, turned towards Volodiyovski, seemed to ask: "Who art thou, what dost thou want here?" for she had never seen the little knight.

He, however, stood in bewilderment at the sight of such beauty, and of this room, furnished with velvet and gold brocade. Presently, he recovered himself and spoke hastily:

"Fear nothing, princess, we are friends of Skshetuski."

The princess sank upon her knees.

"Save me," she cried, clasping her hands. But at that moment Zagloba plunged into the room, red, trembling, and panting.

"It is we," he cried, "we, and we are bringing assistance!"

When the princess heard these words and saw that well-known face she bent like a cut-off flower, her hands fell and her lids closed over her eyes. She had fainted.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

The horses had hardly been allowed to rest, but still they flew onward with such speed, that when the moon had risen over the steppes, the party had reached the vicinity of Studenka on the other side of the Valadynka. At the head rode Pan Volodiyovski, looking carefully about him in all directions, behind was Zagloba beside Helena and at the end of the train Jendzian, leading the horses of burden, and two reserve horses which he had not forgotten to take from the stable of Horpyna. Zagloba did not give his tongue a minute's rest, he had indeed many things to tell the princess, who, having been secluded in the wild ravine, knew nothing of what was going on in the world. He told her how a friend had searched for her from the beginning, how Skshetuski had gone to Pereyaslav in order to look for Bohun, not knowing of his defeat, and how finally Jendzian succeeded in worming the secret of her hiding-place from the ataman, and had brought the same to Zbaraj.

"Merciful God!" said Helena turning her beautiful pale face towards the moon, "so Pan Skshetuski has followed my traces beyond the Dnieper!"

"As far as Pereyaslav, I repeat. And surely he would have come hither with us had we had time to send word to him; but we wanted to hurry to your aid without delay. He knows nothing of your rescue yet, and prays daily for your safety—but he needs no pity. Let him suffer a while longer inasmuch as such reward awaits him."

"And I thought I was forgotten by all and prayed to God to let me die."

"We had not only not forgotten you, but were all the time planning how we might rescue you and come to your aid. It was only natural that Skshetuski and myself should have given serious attention to the matter, but this knight too, who rides before us, with an equal self-sacrifice, spared neither care nor trouble nor toil."

"May God reward him for it."

"Both of you evidently possess something that attracts men to you; but to Volodiyovski, you are really indebted, for, as I have said, we together cut up Bohun like a pike."

"Pan Skshetuski in Rozloga spoke about Pan Volodiyovski as his best friend, he said . . . "

"And he was right. There abides a great soul in that little body. Just at present, he is somewhat shy, for your beauty has evidently dazzled him. But when he gets over it, he will come to himself. We together did great work at the election of the king."

"So there is already a new King?"

"So you have not even heard of this, poor soul, in that cursed desert?" Why John Casimir was elected last Fall and has been reigning now for eight months. A great war has broken out with the rebels, and God help us! for Prince Yeremy was forced to resign, and in his stead others were chosen, who were fitted better for feasts than for war."

"And will Pan Skshetuski also go to this war?"

"He is a good soldier, and I doubt if even you can keep him back from it. We are alike in this respect. As soon as we smell powder, no power on earth can hold us back. Oh, last year we made ourselves felt by that mob. The whole night would not suffice for me to tell you all that happened. Of course, we shall go to the war, but the main thing is that we have found you, poor child, without whom life for us was a burden."

The princess turned her sweet face to Pan Zagloba.

"I do not know why you love me so much, sir, but you cannot love me more than I love you."

Zagloba sighed deeply with content.

"Do you really love me so much?"

"As I live, I do."

"God reward you, for this will lighten the burden of my old age. It is an every-day matter for me to attract the attention of women. This was the case during the election in Warsaw. Volodiyovski is a witness. But what care I any longer for the love of women, despite the warmth of my heart—I will content myself with fatherly feelings alone."

Silence followed, then the horses snorted one after another, which was a good omen.

"Good luck! Good luck!" exclaimed the horsemen.

The night was clear. The moon ascended higher and higher in the sky richly set with stars, which grew smaller

and paler. The tired horses slackened up and the riders themselves began to grow weary. Volodiyovski was the first to rein in his horse.

"It's about time to rest," said he, "it will soon be dawn."

"Yes, it is time," repeated Zagloba. "I am so tired that I see two heads on my horse."

But before they lay down to sleep, Jendzian prepared supper; he made a fire, and taking off the saddle-bags from a horse, he got out the supplies which he had purchased in Yampol, near Burlay. There was corn bread, cold meat, delicacies and Wallachian wine. At the sight of the two leather bottles, which were filled with beverage and gave out a splashing and pleasant sound, Zagloba forgot all about sleep, and the others also fell to and ate with a good will. There was plenty for all, and when they were satisfied, Zagloba wiped his mouth with his coat-sleeve, and said:

"Till life ends, I shall never cease to repeat, God's ways are marvellous. See, my dear lady, you are free and we are sitting here joyfully under God's sky, drinking Burlay's wine. I will not deny that Hungarian wine would be better, for this smells of leather, but on the journey it is good enough."

"I cannot get over wondering at one thing," said Helena, "and that is that Horpyna gave me up so easily to you."

Zagloba looked at Volodiyovski and at Jendzian and winked at them.

"She consented because she had to. Anyway, why should we conceal it, for it is no shame that we killed her, together with Cheremis."

"What?" asked the princess frightened.

"Did you hear the shot?"

"I heard it; but I thought Cheremis was shooting."

"It was not Cheremis, but this youth here, who shot the witch through and through? The devil is in him, that is sure; but he could not do otherwise, for whether on account of a whim, or whether she divined something, the witch wished to ride with us in any event. We could not allow this, for she would have soon noticed that we were not riding to Kiev. So he shot her then, and I made way with Cheremis. He was indeed an Afican monster, and I do not think that God will count it against me. Even in hell he must arouse general disgust. Shortly before our departure from the retreat, I rode ahead and drew the bodies somewhat aside, so that the sight of the corpses might not frighten you, or that you might not think it an evil omen."

Then the princess said:—

"In these terrible times, I have seen too many persons who were near to me slain, to become frightened at the sight of corpses, still, I should have preferred if no blood had been shed, lest God might punish us."

"Nor was it a chivalrous act," curtly remarked Volodiyovski. "I would not soil my hands with it."

"What's the use of thinking over the matter now," said Jendzian. "It couldn't be otherwise. Had we killed a good man, I would not have a word to say, but to kill enemies of God is allowable. Had I not seen myself that the witch was in a league with devils! I do not regret that matter at all."

"And what does Pan Jendzian regret?" asked the princess.

"That there is money hidden in the ground of which Bohun told me. But because the gentlemen compelled us to hurry, I had no time to dig it up, although I knew the spot by the mill accurately. It also broke my heart that we had to leave behind us so many precious things in the place where your Ladyship dwelt."

"Behold the kind of a servant you are getting," said Zagloba to the princess, "with the exception of his master, he would tear the skin from anyone, from the devil himself, to make a collar of it."

"If it please God, Jendzian will have no reason to complain of my ungratefulness," answered Helena.

"I thank your Grace, very humbly," said the lad, kissing her hand.

Meanwhile Volodiyovski sat silent, drinking wine from the leathern bottle, with his brow contracted in a frown, until his unusual silence drew Zagloba's attention to him.

"And Pan Michael," said he, "hardly utters a word," and turning to the princess, he added:

"Did I not tell you that your beauty had paralyzed his tongue and his intellect."

"You had better get some sleep before daybreak," replied the knight, much confused, and twisting his little moustache to a point.

But the old nobleman was right; the extraordinary beauty of the princess had stunned and entranced the little knight. He looked at her again and again, and asked himself, "Is it possible that such a being live upon this earth?" Doubtless he had seen many beauties in his life, the Pannas Anna and Barbara Zbaraska were beautiful, Anna Borzobahata's beauty

defied all description. Panna Zukovna to whom Pan Rostvorovski was paying attention, was charming also, and Panna Viershulova Skoropadzka and Panna Bohovitynyanka, but none of them could compare with this beautiful wild-flower of the steppes. In the presence of the others, Pan Volodiyovski was always lively and talkative; but now when he glanced at those sweet half-veiled, velvet eyes, the silky lashes of which drooped on her rosy cheeks; when he beheld her luxuriant hair that spread like a hyacinth over her arms and shoulders, her slender figure, her beautifully-rounded bosom, which lightly rose and sank, as she breathed; exhaling warm love, and when he looked on her lily and rose white complexion and the roses on her cheeks, and on her red lips, then Pan Volodiyovski completely lost his speech, and worst of all, he appeared to himself so clumsy, stupid and diminutive as to appear ridiculous. She is a princess, and I am but a school boy, thought he with bitterness, and he longed for an adventure, possibly with a giant, who might emerge from the darkness; then poor Pan Michael would show that he was not as small as he appeared. He was also put out because Zagloba, evidently delighted that his fair daughter was the object of so much attention, gave vent to many knowing winks and nods, and joked him not a little.

Meanwhile she sat before the fire. The white moon and the red flames cast their light upon her. She sat still and quiet, looking more and more beautiful.

"Admit, Pan Michael," said Zagloba, the next morning when they were alone for a moment, "that there is not such another girl throughout the entire Commonwealth. If you can show me such another, you can call me a fool, and demented besides."

"I don't deny it," said the little knight. "She stands alone, and I have never seen her like before. Even those marble statues of the goddesses in the palace of Panna Kazanovski, which, though cut from marble, seem to be alive, cannot compare with her. I am not surprised that the bravest men risked their lives on her account, for she is worth it."

"What! As God is my judge," said Zagloba, "one does not know whether she is more beautiful in the morning or in the evening, for she seems ever as fresh as a rose. I told you that I once was also wonderfully handsome, but even in those days, I should have been obliged to bow to her although many say that she resembles me as one goblet does another."

"Oh, go to the devil!" exclaimed the little knight.

"Do not treat me with such scorn, Pan Michael, for you frown like Mars already. You gaze at her like a goat at a cabbage, and pucker your brow; one would swear that desires torment you, but the sausage is not for the dog."

"Fie," exclaimed Volodiyovski, "as an old man are you not ashamed to talk such nonsense?"

"Why do you look so downcast?"

"Because you believe that all danger is behind us, that we are in safety and that evil has flown like a bird in the air. But we must consider how we can avoid the one and overcome the other. The way that lies before us is full of danger, God knows what is awaiting us, for the region into which we go is surely now in flames."

"When I abducted her from Bohun in Rozloga, it was worse, because pursuit was behind us and revolution before us; nevertheless, we traversed the entire Ukraine crossing an ocean of flames to Bar. What is the use of the heads upon our shoulders. If it comes to the worst, we are not far from Kamenets."

"Yes, but the Turks and Tartars are not far from there either."

"What are you telling me?"

"I only speak the truth, and that is worth while thinking about. It would be better to skirt around Kamenets and go directly to Bar for the Cossacks respect a safe-conduct and we could easily get through the 'blacks,' but should a single Tartar get sight of us we are lost. I know their tricks by a long experience, and understand how to steal around a Tartar camp like a wolf or a bird, but should we chance upon one now without warning, I should be at loss what to do."

"Well, then let us go to Bar or around it, and may a pest destroy the Lipkovs and Cheremis of Kamenets. You evidently do not know that Jendzian received a safe-conduct from Burlay? We can roam about among the Cossacks singing. We have left the worst desert behind us, we are coming now into an inhabitated land. We must take care that we always stop at some farm before nightfall, for this will be safer and more comfortable for the lady. It seems to me Pan Michael, that you look at things too darkly. By Jove, it were a strange thing if three fellows like ourselves, without flattering myself or you, could not take care of ourselves in the steppes. We shall combine our wits with your sabre, and

'Haida! onward! We can do nothing better. Jendzian has his safe-conduct from Burlay, that's the main thing, for Burlay rules the whole of Podolia, and once we have Bar behind us, we shall find Lantskorontski's troops. Haida! Come on Pan Michael, let us lose no time."

They hurried onward towards the northwest as fast as the horses could go. On the heights of Mohilov, they reached inhabitated land, so that it was no longer difficult for them to find a farm or village where they could spend the night, but with the dawn they were always on their horses, and on the way. Fortunately the summer was dry, the days were warm, and the nights dewy, and in the morning the steppes glistened like silver frost. The winds had dried the ponds; the rivers were shallow, and could be forded without difficulty. After they had gone for some distance along the Lozova, they stopped for a more protracted rest in Sharagrod where a division of Burlay's Cossack's was encamped. Here they met delegates of Burlay, and among them Captain Setnik Kuna, whom they had seen in Yampol at the feast given by Burlay. The Captain Setnik was somewhat surprised that they did not pass through Bratslav, Raygrod, Skvira to Kiev, but no suspicion entered his mind, especially as Zagloba explained to him that they had not taken that course through fear of the Tartars, having heard that the latter were marching up from the Dnieper. Kuna told them in reply that Burlay had sent him to the regiment to announce the campaign, and that he, himself, with all the Yampol and Budziak-Tartars would come to Sharagrod and push on from there.

Special messengers had come to Burlay from Khmyelnitski with the news that war was declared, and with orders to lead all the squadrons to Volhynia. Burlay, himself, had intended long ago to go to Bar, and only waited for the Tartars to join him, for at Bar things were going badly for the rebels.

Pan Lantskoronski had defeated a considerable body then, and had captured the city and occupied the castle. Several thousand Cossacks had fallen, and these the old Burlay wished to revenge, or at least to retake the castle. Kuna said, however, that the latest orders from Khymelnitski to proceed onward to Volhynia had prevented this action, and that Bar would not be besieged, unless the Tartars insisted upon it at all hazards.

"Now, Pan Michael," said Zagloba, the next day, "Bar lies before us, and I could for the second time find the princess

a safe retreat there, but the deuce take that place. I trust neither Bar nor any other fortress since the rebels have more cannon than the army of the Crown. What disturbs me is, that a storm is threatening all about us."

"It is not only threatening, but it is breaking right at our heels in the shape of the Tartars; if they should overtake us, they would not be a little surprised, that instead of going to Kiev, we should be going in an opposite direction."

"And Burlay would be ready to show us another way. May the devil show him first the way which leads directly to hell. Let us make a contract. I will engage to get through these rascals, but when we come among the Tartars, there, you must use your wits."

"It is a simple matter to deal with this mob, as they take us for their own." answered Volodiyovski, "but as regards the Tartars, my advice is to flee from them as fast as possible, so that we may escape their toils. Our horses are good, but wherever an opportunity offers, we must buy new ones on the way in order to have a fresh relay."

"Pan Longin's purse will probably pay our way, but should it not, Jendzian must lend us Burlay's, and now onward!"

And they rushed onward still faster until the foam covered the flanks of the horses and fell like snow on the green steppe. They passed through Derla and Lodava. Volodiyovski bought fresh horses in Bark. But the old ones were not left behind; for those that Burlay had presented to them were thoroughbreds, and therefore they kept them as reserves. Shorter and shorter became their pauses for rest, and fewer their stops in sheltered places. They all enjoyed fine health, and although Helena was fatigued by the journey, still she gained strength day by day. In the ravine she had led a secluded life, and had rarely left her gilded cage for fear of meeting the shameless Horpyna, and being compelled to listen to her talk. Now the fresh air of the steppe restored her health, her cheeks became rosy, the sun tanned her face, and her eyes gained fresh fire. Often when the winds curled her hair on her forehead, one might have taken her for a gypsy; or a wonderful witch, or have thought that a gypsy queen was prancing across the wide steppe, with flowers pringing up before her, and an escort of knights behind.

Pan Volodiyovski gradually became accustomed to her wonderful beauty, the journey had brought them closer to

each other, and he became himself again. He regained his former gayety and spirits, and his speech, and as he rode by her side, he told her many things about Lubni, and especially about his friendship with Skshetuski, for he noticed that she liked to listen to talk about him.

Sometimes he teased her, saying:

"I am Bohun's friend, and I'll take you to him, Princess."

Then she would clasp her hands as if in great fear, and beseech him with soft words.

"Do not do so, dear knight, rather kill me on the spot."

"That I would not do! I cannot do that!" answered the little knight sternly.

"Kill me," repeated the princess, closing her eyes, and extending her neck.

Then a strange flush overcame the knight, he felt as if ants were crawling all over him. "This girl mounts to one's head like wine," he said to himself, "but I shall not get intoxicated, for the wine belongs to another;" and Pan Michael shook himself and galloped away, and when he had plunged into the tall grass of the steppe, like a sea-mew into water, the ants departed; and he turned all his attention to the way they were going, looking carefully to see that they were on the right track, and that no danger was threatening them from any quarter. He stood up in his stirrups, and his little moustache rose above the waving grass as he looked all around listening and sniffing like a Tartar, when hunting in the Wild Lands.

Pan Zagloba was also in the best of spirits.

"Our flight is easier now,' said he, "than formerly on the Kahamlik, where we had to run along on foot, panting like dogs, with the tongue hanging out. My tongue was so dry that I could saw wood with it, and now thank God, we can rest at night, and also have something to lubricate our throat with from time to time."

"Do you remember, Sir, how you bore me in your arms across the water?" asked Helena.

"If it please God, you will also see the day when you will carry something in your arms—Skshetuski will see to that."

"Ho, ho!" laughed Jendzian.

"Say no more I pray you," whispered the princess, blushing and with downcast eyes.

Thus they diverted themselves on the steppe as well as they could to pass the time. Finally beyond Bark, and Yoltushka,

they entered a region which showed the devastation of war. Until recntly bands of rebels, had camped there, and there Lantskoronski had defeated them, and left everything in ruins behind him, for he had retired only a few days previously to Zbaraj. Our party learned also from the villagers that Khmyelnitski together with the Khan and his entire forces had moved against the Poles, or rather against the commanders, whose troops had mutinied, and who refused to serve except under Vishnyovyetski. Besides there was a general feeling that if Khmyelnitski and Yeremy should meet, either the Poles or the Cossacks would be wiped out. Meanwhile, the whole country rose up in arms, and every one seized their weapons and marched off to the north to join Khmyelnitski. From the low lands of the Dniester, and from Nij, Burlay was advancing with all his forces, and drawing to himself regiments from their winter-quarters and garrisons from the towns, for the order to mobilize had gone forth everywhere. So they marched in divisions of hundreds and squadrons and regiments and following them streamed the disorderly "blacks" armed with flails, pitch-forks, knives and spears. Horse-herders and cattle-drivers threw away their scythes, farmers deserted their lands, bee-keepers their bees, the wild fishermen their banks on the Dniester, and the hunters their forests. Hamlets, villages and towns were deserted. In three provinces there remained only the old women and children, for the maidens had marched out with the men against the poles. At the same time from the east, like a threatening storm came the forces of the Khmyelnitski, who with powerful hand destroyed places and castles on his way, killing all whom former contests had spared. When the party had left Bar with all its sad memories for the princess behind them, they took the old highway that led through Latichov and Ploskirov to Tarnopol, and onwards to Lemberg. Here they often encountered big trains of wagons, divisions of infantry, and of Cossack cavalry, bands of peasants and enormous herds of oxen, which stirred up great clouds of dust as they were driven along to make provision for the Cossack and Tartar soldiery. Now, their journey became dangerous, for they were continually questioned as to who they were, whence they came, and whither they were going. To the Cossack regiments Zagloba showed his safe-conduct from Burlay, and said:

"We are messengers from Burdaj and we are taking the maid to Bohun."

At the sight of the safe-conduct of the dreaded colonel the swarm of Cossacks which surrounded them would fall back, for they thought that if Bohun was alive, he must be already near the main army about Zbaraj, or Konstantinov. But the party had still more trouble with the "blacks" and wild bands of drunken and ignorant herdsmen who had no idea of the meaning of the safe-conduct, issued by the colonel. Had it not been for Helena, Zagloba, Volodiyovski and Jendzian, would have been taken by these half savage tribes for their own kind, as sometimes actually happened, but Helena attracted the attention of all on account of her sex and her beauty, and therefore, there arose dangers, which they could only avoid by taking the greatest precaution.

Sometimes Zagloba showed the safe-conduct; sometimes Volodiyovski showed his teeth, and many a corpse they left behind them? At times they were saved from disaster only by the great speed of Burlay's racers, and the journey which at the outset had begun so favorably, became more difficult day by day. Helena, who though brave by nature, felt the strain of sleepless nights and of continuous alarm, now began to fail in health. She looked like a captive who is dragged unwillingly into the camps of the enemy. Zagloba continually formed new plans which Volodiyovski carried out, and both of them consoled the princess as well as they could.

"We must leave the swarms of ants behind which now confront us and reach Zbaraj," said the little knight. "Here, Khmyelnitski, with the Tartars floods the whole region about."

They had learned on the way that the commanders had assembled at Zbaraj and intended to hold the town. They had gathered there expecting that Prince Yeremy would join them with his division, as a considerable portion of his forces were quartered in Zbaraj. Now our party drew near to Ploskirov. The swarms on the high roads began to grow thinner, for but ten miles away the country was occupied by the royal forces. The Cossack bands did not dare to advance further. They preferred to wait at a safe distance, for the arrival of Burlay on one side, and of Khmyelnitski from the other.

"But ten more miles, but ten more miles!" repeated Zagloba rubbing his hands. "If we can only reach the first squadrons, we surely will get safely to Zbaraj."

Pan Volodiyovski, however, decided to provide new horses

at Ploskirov, for those they had purchased in Bark, were no longer any good, and those which Burlay had given them, had to be spared for a dark hour. This precaution was necessary, for rumors were afloat that Khymelnitski was already near Konstantinov and that the Khan was approaching with all his hordes from Pilavyets.

"It is best for us to remain with the princess here outside the town, and not to show ourselves," said the little knight to Zagloba when they had arrived at a small deserted cottage about two furlongs from the town.

"But you go to the villagers and see if they have any horses for sale or exchange. It is evening already, but we must remain in the saddle all night."

"I'll be back soon," said Zagloba.

He rode onward to the town. Volodiyovski then ordered Jendzian to loosen the saddle-girths so as to give the horses a chance to rest. He then led the princess into the house, and bade here to refresh herself with wine and sleep.

"I would like to have those ten miles behind us by daybreak," he said to her, "then we can all rest."

No sooner had he brought the wine and some provisions, than the sound of horses' hoofs was heard at the door. The little knight looked out the window.

"Zagloba is back already," said he, "he surely has found no horses."

At that moment the door opened, and Zagloba appeared pale, blue, perspiring and breathless.

"Mount your horses," he cried.

Pan Michael was too experienced a soldier to lose time in asking questions. He did not even take time to snatch up the wine-bag, this, however, Zagloba grasped, but immediately led the princess into the yard and helped her into her saddle, and casting a glance at the saddle-girths to see if they were tight, he cried:

"Mount your horses!"

There was a sound of clattering hoofs, and horsemen and horses vanished in the darkness like a dream cavalcade. They galloped for a long time without resting. But not till about a mile separated them from Ploskirov, and the darkness had grown so dense that the pursuit was impossible, did Volodiyovski approach Zagloba and ask:

"What was it?"

"Wait, Pan Michael, wait. I am dreadfully out of breath. My legs were nearly paralyzed. Ugh!"

"But what was it?"

"The devil himself, I tell you, the devil himself, or a dragon on which a second head grows, as soon as the first one is chopped off."

"Speak plainly, I beg of you?"

"I saw Bohun in the market-place."

"Are you delirious?"

"I saw him in the market-place as true as I live, and five or six people with him. I did not count them. I could hardly stand on my feet—they held torch-lights for him—methinks an evil spirit is working against us; I have lost all faith in the success of our enterprise. Is that devil immortal, or what? . . . don't speak to Helena about it, for God's sake."

"You killed him, Jendzian gave him up? No! And still he lives, is free, and crosses our path again. Ugh! Oh God! God! I tell you, Pan Michael, that I would rather see a ghost in a churchyard than him. What in the devil kind of a fortune have I to always be the first one to see him everywhere. To the dogs with such luck! Are there no other people in the world? Could he not appear to others? No, always me, and only me."

"And did he see you?"

"If he had seen me, you Pan Michael would have never seen me again. That was the only thing wanting."

"It would be well to know," said Volodiyovski, "if he is in pursuit of us, or if he is going to Valadynka, to Horpyna with the intention of catching us on the way."

"It seems to me, that he is going to Valadynka."

"That is probably the case. Then we shall ride in one direction, he in another, and if now one or two miles were between us, there will be five in an hour from now. Before he learns about us on the road and turns back, we shall be not only in Zbaraj but in Jolkov."

"Do you think so, Pan Michael? Thank God. You relieve my mind greatly, but tell me how is it possible that he has regained his freedom since Jendzian gave him up to the commander in Vlodava."

"He simply escaped."

"Oh, the Commander deserves to have his head chopped off. Jendzian, hey! Jendzian!"

"What do you want?" said the lad reining in his horse.

"To whom did you give Bohun up?"

"To Pan Rogovski."

"And who is this Pan Rogovski?"

"A fine gentleman; a lieutenant of the cuirassiers of His Majesty, the King."

"You go to ——" said Volodiyovski, snapping his fingers. "Now I can explain matters. Don't you remember what Longin told us about the enmity between Skshetuski and Rogovski? He is a relative of Pan Lashch, and hates Skshetuski on his account."

"I see, I see!" cried Zagloba. "He liberated Bohun out of spite, but this is a criminal offence, whose penalty is the gallows. I shall be the first to report it."

"If God should let me meet him once we shall hardly need to go before a tribunal."

Jendzian did not understand what the trouble was, for after answering Zagloba's question, he rode forward again beside the princess. They had now slackened their pace, the moon had risen, the fog which since the evening had enveloped the earth now lifted, and the night became clear. Volodiyovski became engrossed in thought. Zagloba was still thinking over his terrible experience. Finally, he said:

"How would Bohun have repaid Jendzian, if he had fallen into his hands?"

"Tell him the news. Let him have a taste of the fright. Meantime, I will ride on with the princess," answered the little knight.

"All right, here! Jendzian."

"What's the matter?" asked the lad, checking the horse again.

Zagloba remained silent for a while, until Volodiyovski and the princess had gotten enough ahead not to overhear it. Then he said:

"Do you know what happened?"

"I don't know."

"Pan Rogovski set Bohun free. I saw him in Ploskirov."

"What, in Ploskirov, just now?" asked Jendzian.

"In Ploskirov, just now! Why don't you fall out of your saddle?"

The moonlight illumined the lad's chubby face, but Zagloba could discover upon it no trace of fright, but he saw with astonishment that it had the same expression of almost brutal rage which he had already noticed when Jendzian killed Horpyna.

"Don't you fear Bohun then?" queried the old noble.

"My Lord," answered the lad, "if Rogovski has set him free, I must try to revenge myself once more the insult and ignominy he heaped upon me. I shall not spare him, for I have sworn vengeance upon him, and were we not escorting the princess now, I would instantly follow his tracks that I might redeem my oath. I intend to keep it."

"Well," thought Zagloba, "I am glad that I have done no injury to this lad."

Then he put spurs to his horse, and came up with the princess and Volodiyovski.

After riding for about an hour they crossed the Medvedovka and entered a forest, which from the river bank stretched along their path like two dark walls.

"I know this region well," said Zagloba. "We shall soon be through this wood. Beyond it is open land for a quarter of a mile, crossed by the highway to Charny-Ostrov, then there are thicker forests extending to Matchyna. May it please God that we find Polish troops already in Matchyna."

"It is high time for our deliverance," murmured Volodiyovski.

Again they rode along in silence for a time, on the brightly-illumined highway.

"Two wolves have just run across our path," said Helena, suddenly.

"I saw them," answered Volodiyovski, "and there is the third one."

Indeed, a gray shadow crept across the way, about a hundred paces before their horses.

"There is a fourth," cried the princess.

"No, that is a deer. Look, lady, two—three."

"What the devil!" cried Zagloba. "The wolves are being chased by deer. The world is topsy-turvy."

"Let us ride faster," said Volodiyovski, his voice trembling from anxiety, "Jendzian, come here, and ride ahead with the princess."

They flew along; but as they rode Zagloba bent over towards Volodiyovski, and asked:

"Pan Michael, what is the trouble?"

"Bad!" answered the little knight. "You observe that the beasts have been disturbed from their sleep in their lairs, and are running about in the night."

"And what does that mean?"

"That means that they are being frightened."

"By whom?"

"By soldiers, either Cossacks or Tartars, who are approaching us from the right."

"But perhaps these are our own troops?"

"That cannot be, for the animals are fleeing from the east, from Pilavyets, and it is certain that the Tartars are approaching in a numerous body."

"Let us fly, Michael, for God's sake."

"There is nothing else to do. If it were not for the princess, we could ride up close to their chambuls, and drag some of them out, but with her, the matter would be too difficult, should they spy us."

"Merciful God, Pan Michael, shall we take to the woods behind the wolves, or what?"

"That cannot be, for though we should escape the enemy at the present moment, they would flood the regions before us, and how then could we evade them?"

"Thunder and lightning strike them. This alone was wanting. But Pan Michael, are you not mistaken, do not wolves follow troops, rather than flee before them?"

"Those in the rear of the troops follow them, and gather from afar, but those which are before them, flee. Look, there to your right among the trees. There gleams a fire."

"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews!"

"Keep quiet! Is the forest much longer?"

"We shall soon come to its end."

"And then do we get into open country?"

"Yes! oh Jesus!"

"Keep quiet. Is there another forest beyond?"

"As far as Matchyna."

"Good.. If only they do not overtake us in the open field! If we will reach yonder forest, then we shall be at home. Let us keep together now."

"Luckily the princes and Jendzian were mounted on Burlay's horses."

They spurred their horses in order to join their friends who were ahead.

"What kind of a fire is that I see at the right?" asked the princess.

"There's no use in concealment," answered the little knight, "they may be the Tartars."

"Jesus Maria!"

"Do not worry my lady, I'll wager my head that we escape them; and in Matchyna are our troops."

"For Heaven's sake! let us make haste," exclaimed Jendzian.

They rode on in silence, flying along like spectres. The forest grew lighter, and they were beginning to get to its end; the fire-light also grew dimmer. Suddenly Helena addressed the little knight.

"Sir," said she, "promise me that you wil not let me fall into their hands alive."

"That will not happen as long as I live," answered Volodiyovski.

Hardly had they emerged from the forest,and entered the open country, or rather the steppe, which extended for about a quarter of a mile, when they beheld beyond another line of forest. The clearing, open in all directions, gleamed in the silvery beams of the moon, as bright almost as the daylight.

"This is the worst part of our way," whispered Volodiyovski to Zagloba, "for if they be in Charny-Ostrov, they must cross here between the woods."

Zagloba did not reply; he only spurred his horse.

They had gotten over half of the clearing, and they were drawing nearer and nearer to the forest before them, and its outlines showed up distinctly, when suddenly the little knight pointed towards the east.

"Look!" said he to Zagloba, "do you see?"

"I see bushes and thickets in the distance."

"But those bushes are moving."

"On, on, they can't fail to see us."

The wind whistled by the ears of the riders, the protecting forest came nearer and nearer. All of a sudden there came a sound like the roaring of ocean waves from the approaching mass on their right, and at the next moment, one mighty shout filled the air.

"They see us," roared Zagloba. "The dogs; the rascals; the devils; the wolves; the ruffians!"

The forest was so near that the fleeing ones already felt its cool raw air blowing upon their faces.

But the cloud of Tartars also grew more distinct and visible, and the dark body shot out long arms like the feelers of a gigantic monster, approaching with inconceivable speed. Volodiyovski's trained ear could already clearly distinguish their cries:

"Allah! Allah!"

"My horse has stumbled," shouted Zagloba.

"That does not matter," replied Volodiyovski.

But like lightning the question flashed through his brain: "What would happen if the horses gave out, or if one of them broke down?"

They were, no doubt splendid Tartar steeds of iron endurance, but they had already made the journey from Ploskirov without rest after the first mad rush from the town to the forest. They might indeed, mount the reserve horses, but these were worn out also.

"What is to be done now?" thought Volodiyovski, and his heart beat in alarm, perhaps, for the first time in his life, not for himself, but for Helena, whom during this long journey he had learned to love as his own sister. Too well he knew that when once the Tartars began to pursue they would not soon relinquish the chase."

"If they overtake us, they shall not take her," said the knight to himself, grinding his teeth.

"My horse has stumbled," cried Zagloba for the second time."

"That does not matter!" repeated Volodiyovski.

Now they sped into the forest. Darkness enveloped them, but several Tartars were not more than a few hundred feet behind them.

The little knight already had made up his mind how to act.

"Jendzian," cried he, "turn with the lady into the nearest pathway."

"All right, sir," answered the lad.

Then the little knight addressesd Zagloba: "Have your pistols ready in your hand." At the same time he grasped the bridle of Zagloba's horse to check its speed.

"What are you doing?" cried the nobleman.

"Nothing, check your horse!"

The distance between them and Jendzian, who flew along with Helena, grew greater and greater. At length the fleeing pair reached a spot where the highway abruptly turned towards Zbaraj and straight ahead the narrow path trailed through the forest, the entrance to which was almost hidden by branches. This Jendzian entered and shortly disappeared with Helena in the thicket and the drakness. Meanwhile Volodiyovski had stopped his horse and that of Zagloba.

"In the name of God what are you doing?" said the noble.

"We must delay the pursuit. There is no other way of rescuing the princess."

"We are lost."

"Let us be lost! Stop here, right by the side of the road. . . . Here, here."

Both tried to hide themselves in the dark shadows of the trees. The mighty tramping of the Tartar horses approached, and rumbled along like a wild tempest, causing the whole forest to resound.

"It has come," said Zagloba. He lifted the wine skin to his lips and drank and drank. Then he shook himself. "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost!" cried he, "I am ready to die."

"Wait, wait," exclaimed Volodiyovski, "three of them are riding in advance; there's just what I desired."

On the clear road there appeared three horsemen, who evidently had the best steeds, so-called wolf-hunters of the Ukraine, their name implying power to overtake the speediest wolf. A few hundred steps behind them were some others, and still farther behind was a dense mass of the horde.

When the first three had come close to the ambush, two shots rang out, and then Volodiyovski sprang like a panther into the middle of the road, and in a second, ere Zagloba had time to think, or had time to exactly appreciate what had happened, the third Tartar fell as if struck by lightning.

"Mount!" shouted the little knight.

Zagloba did not wait for further instructions. They fled along the highway like two wolves chased by a pack of bloodthirsty hounds. Meantime, the Tartars in the rear reached their dead comrades, and when they saw that the hunted wolves could inflict deadly wounds, they paused for a while to wait for their other comrades.

"See!" said Volodiyovski, "I knew that we could retard them."

But though the fleeing ones had gained an advantage of a few hundred steps, the pursuit was not interrupted for long, but the Tartars now rode in larger companies, and no small detachment now pushed forward as before.

The horses of the fleeing ones, however, became exhausted by the long ride, and their speed slackened. Zagloba's horse in particular, as it bore considerable burden, stumbled repeatedly; the few remaining hairs on the old man's head stood up like bristles at the thought that he might fall.

"Michael, dearest Michael, do not desert me!" he cried in despair.

"Don't worry about that," replied the little knight.

"This horse, may the wolves—" he did not finish the sentence, an arrow swished by his ear followed by more, whistling and humming about like bees and gadflies. One arrow sped so close to Zagloba's ear, that its haft almost touched him.

Volodiyovski turned and again fired two shots at his pursuers.

Zagloba's horse now stumbled so badly, that its nostrils almost touched the ground.

"By the living God! my horse is breaking down," cried Zagloba in a heart-breaking voice.

"Get off the saddle and into the woods," ordered Volodiyovski.

Then he reined in his horse and springing off disappeared with Zagloba into the darkness.

But this manoeuvre did not escape the eyes of the Tartars. Several of them sprang from their horses, and continued the pursuit.

The branches tore the cap off Zagloba's head, slapped him in the face, and caught his coat, but the noble kept bravely on, and ran as if he were but thirty years old. At times he fell, but he rose again, and ran on still faster panting and puffing like a bellows. Finally he fell into a hole and felt that he could not get out of it, for his strength had deserted him entirely.

"Where are you?" whispered Volodiyovski.

"Here in a hole, all is over with me. Save me, Michael!"

But Pan Michael jumped immediately into the hole and closed Zagloba's mouth with his hand.

"Keep still, perhaps, they won't notice us; at any rate, we will defend ourselves."

Meanwhile, the Tartars came up. Some indeed passed the hole, thinking that the runaways were ahead; others advanced slowly, looking about them carefully in all directions.

The knights held their breath.

"Let one fall in here," thought Zagloba in desperation, "I'll fix him."

Now sparks flew all about, the Tartars began to strike fire. In the light their wild faces could be seen, with protruding cheek-bones and thick lips; how they blew at the flickering wood! For some time they kept going about in a circle, but

THE PERIL OF ZAGLOBA AND PAN MICHAL.

a few steps away from the hole. They approached like ill-omened phantoms of the forest, and came nearer every moment.

A moment later a great uproar arose from the highway and penetrated the silent depths of the forest.

The Tartars ceased striking fire, and stood dumbfounded. Volodiyovski's hand convulsively grasped Zagloba's arm.

The noise grew louder, and suddenly red lights flashed up, and following them, the sound of volleys, the sound of muskets; then another and another mingled with shouts of "Alllah, Allah!" Then was heard the clash of sabres, the neighing of horses, the trampling of hoofs and tumultuous uproar. A battle was taking place on the highway.

"Ours, ours!" shouted Volodiyovski.

"Kill, slay, cut, slaughter!" roared Zagloba.

The next moment several dozen Tartars rushed past the hole in wild confusion in the direction of their comrades.

Volodiyovski could not restrain himself any longer; he followed close upon their heels into the thicket amid the darkness.

Zagloba remained at the bottom of the pit. After a time he attempted to crawl out, but he could not; every bone in his body was aching, he could hardly stand on his feet.

"Wait you rascals," said he, looking about him. "You have run away, but it's a pity one of you didn't stay here. I sigh for company and wouldn't I show him where pepper grows. Oh Pagans, I will slaughter you like cattle! My God, the noise is growing louder! I would that Prince Yeremy himself were there, he would make it hot for you. You shout, 'Allah, Allah!' soon the wolves will yelp 'Allah!' over your carrion; but think of it, Michael has left me here alone. Well, it is no wonder, for he is young and fiery. After this expedition, I will follow him to hell, for he is not a friend that leaves one in distress, he is a wasp. In one moment he stung three of them. If I only had the wine-skin here; but the Devil has surely taken it. The horses must have trampled over it. The insects are biting me in this cursed hole. But what was that?"

The shouting and the sound of muskets now sounded in the dircetion of the open field and of the first forest.

"Ah!" said Zagloba, "they are at their heels already. Oh, dog-brothers you did not hold your ground. Thanks be to God, most High!"

The shouts grew still fainter.

"They ride valiantly," murmured the nobleman, "but I see that I am doomed to stay in this hole, perhaps, to become the prey of wolves. First Bohun, then the Tartars, and at last the wolves. May God given Bohun to the stake; and madness to the wolves; it was the Tartars who ran, our men will not spare them. Michael! Michael!" But only silence answered to Zagloba's shouts; the forest murmured, and afar off, the noises grew fainter and fainter.

"If matters remain like this, I shall have to sleep here. The devil take it! Hello! Michael!"

But Zagloba's patience had to stand a longer test, for it was dawn when the galloping of the horses was heard again on the road and light broke in the forest.

"Pan Michael, here I am!" called out the nobleman.

"Creep out of there."

"How can I?"

Pan Michael stood at the edge of the hole with a torch in his hand. He stretched out his other hand to Zagloba, and said:

"Well, the Tartars are gone. We drove them beyond the forest.'

"And who was with you?"

"Kushel and Rotzvorovski with two thousand horse. My dragoons were also with them."

"And were there many Tartars?"

"Well, a couple of thousand."

"God be praised! Give me a drink, for I am faint."

Two hours later Zagloba sat in a comfortable saddle among Volodiyovski's dragoons. He had had his fill of food and drink. Beside him rode the little knight, who said:

"Don't worry; for even if we do not reach Zabaraj in company with the princess, it is better anyway, than if she had fallen into the hands of the pagans."

"But, perhaps, Jendzian will convey her to Zbaraj?" asked Zagloba.

"He will not do that. The highways will be occupied. For the chambuls which we have repulsed, wil return soon to follow in our footsteps. Moreover, Burlay may arrive at any moment at Zbaraj, before Jendzian could get there. On the other side Khmyelnitski and the Khan are marching from Konstantinov."

"Oh, my God! then the princess will fall into a net."

"It is Jendzian's lookout to get through between Zbaraj and Konstantinov in time, and here Khmyelnitsi's squadrons

and the hordes of the Khan surround them. I believe that he appreciates this fact."

"God grant it."

"The boy is as cunning as a fox. You are a shrewd fellow, I admit; but he is still more crafty. We worried our heads over plans of how to save the girl, but at the end we were helpless. He made everything all right again. He will crawl out of this difficulty like a snake, for his own life is at stake. Trust in God, who has protected her so many times; and remember that in Zbaraj you bade me have confidence when Zakhar came there."

These words somewhat consoled Zagloba, but he became lost in thought.

"Pan Michael," said he, after a time, "have you asked Kushel where Skshetuski is?"

"He is in Zbaraj, and thank God, he is well. He came with Zatsvilikhovski, from Prince Koretski."

"But what shall we tell him?"

"That is a knotty point?"

"He still believes, does he not, that the girl was murdered in Kiev?"

"That's so."

"And have you told Kushel, or any one else whence we came?"

"Not as yet, for I thought it best to talk matters over first."

"It would be better to keep the whole matter a secret," said Zagloba, "for should the girl (God forbid) fall again into the hands of the Cossacks or Tartars, this would be new sorrow for Skshetuski, just as if someone should tear open his recently-healed wounds."

"I will stake my head that Jendzian will get her through all right."

"I would stake my own too, but misfortune stalks abroad like a pestilence. Let us drop the subject, and leave everything to the will of God."

"So be it. But will Podbipyenta keep the secret from Skshetuski?"

"You do not know him, he pledged his word of honor, which is sacred to this strange Lithuanian."

Kushel now joined them, and they rode on together in the early morning discussing public affairs, the arrival of the commanders at Zbaraj in consequence of Prince Yeremy's commands, the expected arrival of the prince himself, and the terrible battle which could not be avoided with the whole force of Khmyelnitski.

CHAPTER II.

At Zbaraj, Volodiyovski and Zagloba found all the royal forces gathered, and awaiting the enemy. Here were the Cup-bearer who had come from Konstantinov and Lantskoronski the Castellan of Kamenets who first warred at Bar, and the third commander, Pan Firley of Dombrovitsa the Castellan of Belsk, Andrey Sierakovski the secretary of the crown and Pan Konyetspolski the standard bearer, and Pan Pshiyemski the general of the artillery, who was especially experienced in the capture of towns and their defence. And with them ten thousand troops besides the forces of Prince Yeremy who had been previously stationed at Zbaraj.

Pshiyemski pitched his camp on the southern slope of the town and fortress behind the two lakes and the Gnierna rivulet, formed a powerful camp which he fortified according to the foreign fashion so that it could only be taken from the front as it was protected on the rear and sides by the lakes, the stream and the castle. In this camp the commanders purposed to resist Khmyelnitski and to hold him in check until the king should arrive with the rest of his forces and the general levy of the entire nobility. But could this plan be carried out against the might of Khmyelnitski? Many doubted that this could be done, and gave good reasons for their doubts, one of them being the disorder in the camp itself. First of all, discord was brewing in secret among the leaders. The Commanders had come to Zbaraj unwillingly, they yielded to the will of Prince Yeremy. They had wished at first to defend Konstantinov, but when news was spread that Prince Yeremy promised to take part in the struggle only on condition that Zbaraj should be selected for the place of defence, the soldiers declared to the royal commanders that they wished to go to Zbaraj, and would fight nowhere else. Neither persuasions nor the authority of the commanders were of any avail, and the commanders soon discovered that should they resist longer, the army, from the hussar regiments down to the last soldiers from the foreign

contingent would leave and go over to Vishnyovyetski's standard. This was but another deplorable example of the lack of discipline so frequent in those days, caused by the incompetence of the leaders, the discord among them, and the fear of Khmyelnitski's strength, and the unheard-of defeats, especially that of Pilavyets.

Consequently, the commanders were obliged to go to Zbaraj, where in spite of the royal appointments, the supreme command passed into the hands of Vishnyovyetski; for the army would obey only him, fight and ie under him alone. But this real leader had not yet come to Zbaraj and therefore the restlessness of the troops increased, discipline was lax, and their hearts grew faint. For it was already known that Khmyelnitski and the Khan were approaching with an army the like of which had not been seen since the days of Tamerlane. Fresh rumors spread through the camp like ill-omened birds, new and more alarming rumors came ever and anon which weakened the courage of the soldiers. It was feared that a panic like the one at Pilavyets might suddenly occur and scatter this handful of troops that barred Khmyelnitski's way to the heart of the Commonwealth. The leaders themselves lost their heads. Their contradictory orders were not carried out, and if at all, unwillingly. Yeremy alone could rescue the camp, the army and the country.

As soon as Zagloba and Volodiyovski arrived with the troops of Kushel they mingled at once in the vortex of military life. No sooner did they reach the square than they were surrounded by officers of different regiments who eagerly inquired after news. At the sight of the captive Tartars new hope arose in the hearts of the curious. "They have stampeded the Tartars, they have taken Tartar prisoners; God has granted a victory," cried some. "The Tartrs are here and Burlay with them," cried others. "To arms, men! To the ramparts!" The report spread through the camp, and Kushel's victory was magnified as it went from mouth to mouth; a rapidly increasing crown gathered about the prisoners. "Kill them," they cried, "what shall we do with them?" Questions fell like snowflakes, but Kushel would not answer and went to the quarters of the Castellan of Belsk to report. Volodiyovski and Zagloba were greeted by acquaintances in the Russian squadron, but they got away as soon as they could, for they wished to see Skshetuski.

They found him in the castle, together with the old Zatsvilikhovski, two monks of St. Bernard that belonged there, and Pan Longin. Skshetuski grew somewhat pale when he saw them. He closed his eyes, for their sight brought him too many sad recollections to bear without pain. But he greeted them calmly, even joyfully, asked them where they had been and was content with any answer they gave, for believing the princess to be dead, he wished for nothing, hoped for nothing, and had not the slightest idea that the long absence of his friends had any bearing upon the princess. Nor did they make any mention of the purpose of their expedition, although Longin gazed at one then at the other, with a questioning look, sighing and twisting about in his place, hunting for even a shadow of hope in their faces. But both were taken up by Skshetuski, whom Pan Michael embraced again and again, for his heart melted at the sight of that faithful friend who had suffered so much and lost so much that life was scarce worth the living.

"You see," said he to Skshetuski, "we shall have all our old comrades with us again and you shall be happy with us. We are on the eve of a war the like of which we have not seen before and which fills the heart of every soldier with delight. If God restores to you your health, you will often find yourself at the head of the hussars."

"God has already restored me my health," replied Skshetuski, "and I wish nothing for myself except to serve as long as service is necessary."

Skshetuski was indeed really well, for his youth and vigorous constitution had overcome his illness. Grief had torn his soul but could not destroy his body. He had merely grown thin and yellow so that his forehead, his cheeks and his nose looked as if moulded of church wax; his former austere look had settled more deeply on his face which had an expression of rigid calmness such as is seen on the face of a corpse. There were now silver threads woven in his dark beard; but in other respects he did not differ from other men, except that contrary to the custom of a soldier he avoided tumults, crowds and drinking bouts, preferring to associate with monks, listening with attention to their discourses about convent life, and the hereafter. But in regard to the war, he performed his duties conscientiously and interested himself equally with the others in regard to the expected siege.

Soon indeed the conversation turned to this subject. for

no one in the camp, in the castle, and in the town, thought of anything else. Then old Zatsvilikhovski enquired about the Tartars and about Burlay whom he had known for a long time.

"He is a great warrior," said he, "and it is to be regretted that he now rebels against his own country with the others. We served together at Khotsim, he was then but a youth but already he gave promise of becoming a remarkable man."

"Why, he comes from the Dnieper regions and leads the Trans-Dnieper men," said Skshetuski, "how is it then, father, that he marches up now from the south from Kamenets?"

"Probably," said Zatsvilikhovski. "Khmyelnitski purposely sent him there to spend the winter, when Tukhay Bey remained on the Dnieper and the Murza greatly hates Burlay from former days. No one has made it so hot for the Tartars as Burlay."

"And now he becomes their messmate?"

"So it is," said Zatsvilikhovski, "such are the times! But Khmyelnitski will take care that they do not eat each other up."

"And when do you expect Khmyelnitski to be here, father?" asked Volodiyovski.

"Any day, who can tell. The commanders ought to send out one scouting party after another, but they don't do it. I had a hard time to get them to send Kushel southward, and Piglovski to Cholhanski Kamyen. I wanted to go myself, but there is council after council here. . . . They should send out some squadrons with the crown secretary. They should make haste lest it be too late. God send us the prince, or disgrace will befall us like that of Pilavyets."

"I saw the soldiers when we rode through the square," said Zagloba, "and it appeared to me that there are more fools among them than good men, they are only fit for shopkeepers and not to be our messmates, who love glory, and value it more than life."

"What are you talking about?" said the old man sharply. "I don't wish to insinuate anything against your bravery, though I have my own opinion about that, but the soldiers here are the flower of the chivalry of the Commonwealth. They need only a head, a leader. Kamyenyetski is a good cavalry officer but no leader; Pan Firley is old, and as to the Cup-bearer, well—he with Prince Dominik made a reputation at Pilavyets. No wonder that no one will obey them.

A soldier sheds his blood readily, if he is sure that it is necessary, but he will not sacrifice himself needlesssly. But now instead of preparing for the siege they are quarreling about the positions they should hold."

"Is there a sufficiency of provisions?" asked Zagloba with alarm.

"Not as much as are needed; but we are worse off in regard to fodder. Should the siege last over a month we shall have only shavings and stones for the animals."

"There is still time enough to make provision," said Volodiyovsky.

"Then go and tell them that. God send our prince, I repeat."

"You are not the only one, who longs for him," interrupted Longin.

"I know it," answered the old man. "Look out upon the square. All who are upon the ramparts are eagerly looking towards old Zbaraj; others mount the towers, and if anyone cries out jokingly 'He comes' everyone goes mad from joy. The thirsty deer pants not more eagerly for the water than we for him. Would that he could get here before Khmyelnitski for I fear that impediments are in his way."

"We pray for his safe arrival all day long," said one of the monks of St. Bernard.

The prayers and wishes of all the knights were soon to be fulfilled, though the following day brought still greater anxiety and was fraught with evil omens. It was Thursday, July 8th, when a frightful storm burst upon the town and over the newly-built ramparts. Rain poured down in torrents. Part of the earthworks was washed away. The Gniezna and both lakes overflowed. In the evening lightning struck a section of infantry under Pan Firley the Castellan of Belsk, killed several men and tore the flag to shreds. This was looked upon as an evil omen—a visible sign of God's wrath, especially as Pan Firley was a Calvinist. Zagloba proposed that a deputation be sent to him with a request that he become converted, for God's blessing could not abide with an army whose leader was living in errors obnoxious to heaven. Many shared this opinion; and it was only the respect due to the Castellan and his dignity that prevented the sending of the deputation. The general discouragement increased. The storm raged without interruption. The ramparts, though strengthened with stones and

palisades, became so soft that the cannon began to sink. They were obliged to put boards under the cannons, mortars, and even under the eight-pounders. In the deep trenches the water rose to the height of a man. Night brought no abatement. The tempest drove before it from the east gigantic mountains of clouds that amidst dreadful thunderings in the sky poured their entire store of rain, lightning and thunder upon Zbaraj. Only the baggage attendants remained in the tents, the soldiers, the commanders, with the exception of the commander of Kamenets, sought shelter in the town. Had Khmyelnitski arrived with the tempest he could have taken the camp without resistance.

Next morning the storm had somewhat abated, though it was still raining off and on. Not before five o'clock did the wind dissipate the clouds. The blue sky then showed itself against the camp, and in the direction of old Zbaraj a rainbow of brilliant seven hues appeared, the mighty arch of which extended with one arm beyond old Zbaraj, while with the other it seemed to drink up the moisture of the Black Forest; it gleamed and played against the background of the scudding clouds.

Hope rose in all hearts. The knights returned to camp and mounted the slippery ramparts in order to enjoy the sight of the rainbow. They began at once to converse in lively fashion and to conjecture what this favorable sign might mean, when Volodiyovski, who with others stood close to the trench, shielded his lynx eyes with his hand and cried out:

"Soldiers are approaching from under the rainbow! soldiers!"

A commotion arose as if a whirlwind had stirred the mass of people and shouts arose. The words "soldiers are coming" flew like arrows from one end of the ramparts to the other. The soldiers began to push and crowd and to gather into groups. Then the noise ceased and it became still; all hands shaded their eyes, all eyes gazed into the distance, and all with bated breath and beating hearts continued to look outward.

And then from beneath the seven-colored arch something emerged and became more and more distinct, rising out of the distance and coming nearer and nearer and growing more and more clearly visible, until at last flags and lances and bunchuks appeared, and then a forest of lances; their eyes did not deceive them, these were soldiers.

Then a mighty shout burst simultaneously from the throats of all, a shout of triumphant joy.

"Yeremy! Yeremy! Yeremy!"

Frenzy seized even the oldest soldiers. Some hurled themselves from the ramparts, waded through the trench, and ran afoot across the flooded plain towards the approaching regiments, others rushed to their horses, others laughed, others wept, extending their hands towards heaven and crying out: "He is coming, our father! our saviour! our leader!" One might have thought that the siege was over, that Khmyelnitski was vanquished and the victory won. The squadrons of the prince had drawn so near that the ensign could be distinguished. As usual the regiments of the light cavalry of the Prince's Tartars, Semenovs and the Wallachians advanced in front, behind them could be seen the foreign infantry under Makhnitski—then Vurtsel's cannons, with the dragoons and the heavy hussars. The sun's rays flashed upon their armor and upon the points of the up-raised lances. An unusual splendor shone upon the advancing army like the halo of victory.

Skshetuski, who with Longin, stood upon the ramparts, recognized from afar his own squadron which he had left behind him in Zamost, and a faint flush suffused his yellowish cheeks. He drew deep breaths as if freeing himself from some great burden and his eyes brightened. Before him were days of superhuman labors, heroic battles, the best means of healing the wounds of his heart and of banishing painful recollections, forcing them deeper and deeper into the secret innermost depths of his soul.

Nearer and nearer came the squadrons, and now scarcely a thousand steps separated them from the camp.

The chiefs came running, in order to witness the arrival of the prince; the three commanders also, and with them Pshhiyemski the crown secretary, the Standard bearer of the crown, the chief of Krasnostavsk, Pan Korf and all other officers, Polish as well as foreign. All shared the general joy, especially Pan Lantskoronski, who was a soldier, a greater knight than a commander, but who loved the glory of war. He pointed with his baton in the direction whence Prince Yeremy came, and in a voice loud enough to be heard by all, he cried:

"Behold, there comes our greatest leader and I am the first to surrender my command and authority into his hands."

Now the regiments of the prince entered the camp. They numbered altogether three thousand men, but they bore in their hearts the courage of a hundred thousand. They were indeed the victors of Pohrebyshch Niemyerow, Makhnovka, and Konstantinov. Acquaintances and friends greeted each other. At the end, the Vurtsel artillery toiled in wearily, dragging after them four cannon, two eight-pounders and six captured grape-shot guns. Altogether, twelve guns. The prince, who had personally supervised the departure of his troops from old Zbaraj, arrived in the evening after sunset. Everybody ran to receive him; the soldiers bearing pine sticks, lamps and torches and chips of combustible wood surrounded the prince's horse and barred his passage. They seized the bridle of his horse so as to have a longer look at him, they kissed his garments, and almost lifted him on their shoulders. The enthusiasm rose to such a stage that not only the native soldiery but also the foreign contingent declared that they would serve him without pay for three months. The throng about the prince so increased that he could not advance a step; but sat upon his white palfrey surrounded by the soldiers like a shepherd among his flock. There was no end to the shouts and hurrahs. The evening was clear and still. Myriads of stars twinkled in the dark sky; ere long good omens appeared. Just as Pan Lantskorovski with his field marshal's baton in his hand approached the prince in order to hand it over to him, a star fell from the vault of the sky and leaving after it a stream of light like a comet, disappeared in the direction of Konstantinov, from whence Khmyelnitski was known to be advancing.

"That was Khmyelnitski's star," cried the soldiers.

"A miracle! A miracle! A visible sign! Long live Yeremy the victor," exclaimed a thousand voices; and the commander of Konstantinov approached and made a sign with his hand to indicate that he wished to speak. Silence fell and he said:

"The King gave me this baton, but I surrender it into your more deserving hands, O victor! and wish to be the first to submit myself to your orders."

"And we also," exclaimed the two other commanders.

Three batons were extended towards the prince, but he drew back his hand and said:

"It was not I who gave you your rank, and therefore I cannot take it from you."

"Together with the three, let there be a fourth," said Firley.

"Long live Vishnyovyetski! long live the commanders!" exclaimed all the nobles, "we will live and die together."

At this moment the prince's horse raised its head, shook its reddish mane, and neighed mightily, while all the horses in the camp answered in unison.

This also was taken as an omen of victory, the eyes of the soldiers flashed fire, the thirst for battle filled their hearts, and a tremor of enthusiasm ran through their bodies. The chiefs shared the general enthusiasm. The Cup-Bearer wept and prayed, the Castellan of Kamenets and the Starosta of Krasnostavsk were the first to clatter their sabres, exciting the soldiers, who, rushing upon the ramparts, stretched their hands out in the darkness towards the direction from whence they expected the enemy, and cried aloud:

"Come on, you dog-brothers, we are ready for you."

That night no one slept in the camp; and until the dawn broke the shouts lasted and the pine torches burned.

In the morning the crown secretary Sierakovski returned from a scouting expedition to Cholhanski Kamyen and reported that the enemy were about five miles from the camp. The expedition had given battle to an outnumbering horde and the two Mankovski, Oleksich and several other trusty soldiers had fallen. Prisoners that had been taken affirmed that behind the horde, Khmyelnitski and the Khan with all their forces were approaching. The day passed in waiting and preparations for defence. The prince having assumed command immediately put the army in order, indicating where each section should take its position and directing how each should defend itself and give succor to the others. A cheerful spirit displayed itself in the camp; discipline was established, and in place of the former confusion, conflict of authority, and uncertainty, good order and accuracy prevailed. In the forenoon all took up their positions. The sentries thrown forward reported from time to time what was going on in the vicinity. Servants sent out to the neighboring villages brought back as much of provisions and provender as they could lay their hands upon. The soldiers upon the ramparts chattered cheerfully and sang, and passed the night in sleeping about the camp-fires, their swords in their hands, ready for the fray at any moment that the fortress might be stormed.

At dawn indeed something black emerged from the direction of Vishnyovtsa. The bells in the town sounded an alarm, and in the camp the plaintive notes of the trumpets put the soldiers on the alert. The infantry regiments drew up on the ramparts, in the openings the cavalry stood ready to attack at the first signal, and along the entire line of the intrenchment little clouds of smoke arose from the fuses.

At this moment the prince appeared upon his white charger. He wore silver armour but no helmet. His eyes shone with gladness and no shadow of concern clouded his countenance.

"We have guests, gentlemen, we have guests," he repeated, riding along the ramparts.

Silence reigned; nothing was heard but the flutter of banners playing in the breeze. The enemy approached nearer and could now be plainly seen.

It was but the first wave that dashed up now, not Khmyelnitsky and the Khan, but a reconnaissance of thirty thousand picked Tartars, armed with bows, muskets, and sabres. Having taken captive fifteen hundred men that had been sent out for provisions, they advanced in dense columns from Vishnyovtsa, and stretching out in a long semicircle they went around from the opposite side towards old Zbaraj.

The prince perceiving that this was but the vanguard of the approaching army ordered the cavalry to advance from the entrenchments. Words of command were heard, the regiments advanced and poured out from behind the ramparts like bees from a hive. The plain was filled with men and horses. From afar the captains with batons in their hands could be seen riding around in squadrons placing them in line of battle. The horses snorted and occasionally their neighs sounded through the lines. Then from out the mass emerged two divisions of Tartars and Semenovs of the prince and went forward in an easy trot. Their bows shook on their backs,, their caps gleamed—they rode in silence, at their head the fair-haired Vyershul, whose horse reared like mad, throwing its forehoofs in the air as if it wished to toss aside its bit and throw itself into the tumult.

There was not a cloud in the blue sky, the day was clear and serene, the advancing host could be discerned as on the palm of the hand.

At this moment there appeared from the direction of old Zbaraj a small wagon-train belonging to the prince, which

had not entered with the army and now hurried on as fast as possible lest the horde should capture it. Indeed it did not escape their vigilance; and soon the long half-moon pushed forward to suround it. Shouts of "Allah!" came to the ears of the infantry on the ramparts. Vyershul's squadrons flew like a whirlwind to the rescue.

But the half-moon reached the train first and surrounded it in a moment like a black ribbon. Simultaneously some thousands of the horde with unearthly howls turned towards Vyershul to surround him also. But here Vyershul's experience and the skill of his soldiers came into play. When he saw that the horde was surrounding him he divided his forces into three parts and galloped to the sides, then he divided them into four parts and then into two; so that each time the enemy had to swing round having no opponent to face. The enemy's wings were thus broken. At the fourth turning they met breast to breast. Vyershul at once attacked the weakest part with his whole strength broke through the line at the first crash and got in the rear of the enemy. Then careless of pursuit he swept towards the wagon-train. Old veterans, who from the ramparts had watched this manoeuvre stuck their arms akimbo and shouted and exclaimed:

"May the balls strike them! only the Prince's captains can lead in this way."

Then in the form of a sharp wedge Vyershul flew towards the wagon-train and struck the ring encircling it as an arrow pierces the body of a man, and immediately penetrated to the centre. Now instead of two combats one raged alone, but all the fiercer. It was a wonderful sight. The wagon-train in the centre of the plain like a moving fortress puffed out clouds of smoke and spat forth fire. Encircling it a black swarm like a mighty whirlwind, horses rushing about without riders; within a wild uproar and the rattling of muskets. In one place some were crowding upon each other, in another they kept unbroken order. As a wild boar that is surrounded tears with his white tusks the bloodthirsty pack of hounds, so that wagon-train defended itself against the Tartars, hoping that other and stronger aid than Viyershul's might come.

Indeed it was not long before the red dragoons of Kushel and Volodiyovski swept along the plain, looking like red flowers driven along by the breeze. They reached the crowd of Tartars and rushing into it as if into a black forest, were

soon lost to sight; but the terrible uproar grew louder. The soldiers wondered that the Prince did not send at once a sufficient force to the rescue; but he delayed purposely in order to show the soldiers the kind of warriors that he had brought with him, and so to increase their courage and prepare them for greater dangers.

The firing from the wagon-train grew fainter, there was evidently no time to load, or the musket barrels had grown too hot. But the shouts of the Tartars grew louder. Then the prince gave a signal and immediately three squadrons of hussars, his own under Skshetuski, one under the Starosta of Krasnostavsk, and a royal squadron under Piglovski shot out of the camp into the battle-field. They charged from the rear, broke through the ring of Tartars like an axe, dispersed them over the plain, chased them towards the woods and drove them a quarter of a mile from the camp. The little wagon-train entered the entrenchments in safety amid the shouts of triumph and thunders of cannon.

The Tartars however knowing that Khmyelnitski and the Khan were close behind, remained in the neighborhood and soon appeared again. With shouts of "Allah!" they circled around the camp, occupying the highways and surrounding the villages, from which black columns of smoke soon arose. Quite a number of horsemen came up close to the entrenchments; these were at once attacked by the soldiers of the prince, especially by detachments of Tartar, Wallachian and dragoon regiments.

Viyershul was unable to take part in these sallies. He had received six wounds on his head while defending the wagon-train and lay in his tent as if dead. Volodiyovski, however, who was as red as a lobster from bloodstains, and could scarce appease his thirst for combat, was everywhere to the front. The skirmishes lasted until evening, the infantry and the knights of reserved squadrons watched the fighting from the ramparts as if looking upon a play. Many prisoners were made and when Pan Michael had made an end of one he turned again and his red uniform was seen flying all over the field. Skshetuski from afar pointed him out to Pan Lantskoronski as a curiosity, for whenever he met a Tartar, the man fell as if struck by lightning. Zagloba, though he could not be heard by Pan Michael, kept shouting out encouraging words from the ramparts. From time to time he addressed the soldiers around him, saying:

"Look, gentlemen, that is the way I taught him to use his sabre. Good! keep on! with God's aid he will soon equal me."

The sun had set meantime, and the soldiers began to retire from the field, on which there remained only dead men and horses. In the town the bells rang the Angelus.

Night came on gradually but it did not grow dark, for all about was the glow of fires. Many villages were in flames, Zaloshtsits, Barzynts, Lublanki, Striyooka, Kretovits, Zariedzie, Vakhlovka, and the entire vicinity as far as the eye could see was ablaze. The clouds of smoke appeared red in the night, the stars shone out from a red background. Great flocks of birds frightened out of the woods and from the thickets and ponds, circled in the reddened air like flying flames. The cattle in their enclosures, frightened at the unusual sight, were bellowing pitifully.

"It is impossible that the vanguard alone has caused such a conflagration," said the veterans to one another in the entrenchments, "without doubt Khmyelnitski with the Cossacks and the entire horde is close at hand."

These were not mere surmises for Pan Sierakovski on the day previous had brought news that the Hetman of the Zaporojians together with the Khan were closely following their vanguard, thus they were expected with certainty. All the soldiers were upon the ramparts, the people were upon the roofs and towers. All were greatly excited. Women wept in the churches and raised imploring hands to the most Holy Sacrament. The fearful suspense bore most heavily upon all, in the camp, in the castle, and the town.

But it did not last long, the night had not passed when the first ranks of the Cossacks and Tartars appeared on the horizon. They were followed by more, by tens, by hundreds and thousands, until it seemed as if all the trees of the forests and groves had cut loose from their roots and were marching towards Zbaraj. In vain did the eye seek an end to those lines. As far as the eye could see there appeared a swarm of men and horses the end of which appeared to be lost in the smoke and flame afar off. Like clouds or like locusts they moved on, covering the entire region with a dreadful moving mass. Before them came the threatening murmurs of human voices like the sough of the wind among the tops of hoary pines in the forest. About a quarter of a mile from the camp they halted and spread themselves about and lit their night-fires.

"You see the fires!" whispered the soldiers, "they spread farther than a horse can go in one breathing."

"Jesus Maria!" said Zagloba to Skshetuski. "I have within me the courage of a lion and feel no fear, but I wish that before to-morrow a flaming thunderbolt might wipe them from the earth. By the love of God, there are too many of them. There will not be a greater throng in the valley of Jehosaphat. And tell me, what do the thieves want? Would it not be better if these thieves remained at home and worked quietly on the land. How can we help it if God has made us nobles and them peasants, with the duty of obedience imposed upon them. Puh! I get furious when I think about it. I am a mild sort of a man and could be applied to wounds, but let them not rouse my wrath! They have been allowed too much liberty, too much bread, therefore they have multiplied like mice in a barn and now wish to fight with the cats. But just wait! wait! here's a cat called Prince Yeremy, and another whose name is Zagloba. What do you think? Will such men stop to negotiate? If the peasants were submissive then their lives might be spared, might they not? One thing worries me all the time and that is if there be a sufficient stock of provisions in the camp. To the devil with it! just look, gentlemen, there behind the conflagration new fires arising, and further away still more fires, may the black plague destroy such a gathering."

"Why talk about negotiations," answered Skshetuski, "when they believe they have everything in their own hands and that they can wipe us out to-morrow."

"But they can't do it, can they?" asked Zagloba.

"That rests with God, but at any rate since the prince is here it will not be easy for them."

"You console me indeed. What do I care if it be easy for them or not; the thing that concerns me is whether they can succeed at all."

"It is no slight consolation for a soldier to feel that he is not laying down his life for nothing."

"To be sure! to be sure! . . . But lightning strike it all! and your consolation with it."

At this moment Longin and Volodiyovski approached.

"The Cossacks and the hordes altogether are said to number half a million," said the Lithuanian.

"May your tongue be cut out!" said Zagloba, "you bring cheerful news."

"It will be easier to repulse them in assault than to attack them in the open field," answered Longin mildly.

"Now that the prince and Khmyelnitski have at last met," said Pan Michael, "there will be no talk about negotiations. Either the governor or the monk. To-morrow will be judgment day," he added rubbing his hands.

The little knight was right, in that war the two fiercest lions had not yet met face to face. The one had conquered the hetmans and the commanders; the other had defeated the mighty Cossack atamans. Each had always been victorious, each was the terror of his enemies; but this encounter was to decide whose scale was to rise or fall. Vishnyovyetski beheld from the ramparts the countless myriads of Tartars and Cossacks and in vain strained his eyes to get them all in view. Khmyelnitski from the field beheld the castle and the camp and thought to himself:

"Over there is my most terrible enemy. If I crush him, who then will stand in my way?"

It was evident that the struggle between these two men would rage long and stubbornly, but the ultimate result could not be doubtful. The Prince at Lubni and Vishnyovtsa stood at the head of fifteen thousand men, the camp-servants included; while behind the peasant chieftain stood all the forces from the sea of Azov and the Don to the mouth of the Danube. Then also with him was the Khan leading the hordes of the Crimea, of Byalogrod, Nohaysh, and of the Dobrudja; the tribes living along the banks of the Dnieper and Dniester, the Nijovs, and a countless "blacks" from the steppes, woods, ravines, towns, villages, hamlets, and farms, and all who had formerly served under the crown; all these were with Khmyelnitski. Besides these, Circasssians, Wallachian, Karalash, Silistrian, and Rumelian Turks, and bands of Servians and Bulgarians joined him. It seemed as if a new migration of nations were taking place, that the nations had abandoned their homes in the freezing steppes and were going westward to conquer new lands and to found a new empire.

This was the proportional strength of the contending forces . . . a handful against hundreds of thousands, an island against the sea. It was no wonder therefore, that many a heart beat with alarm; that not only this town, not only this corner of the country, but the whole Commonwealth looked upon this lonely entrenchment circled by a

deluge of wild warriors as the tomb of noble knights and of their great leader.

Khmyelnitski also regarded it in the same light, for hardly had the fires been kindled in his camp when there appeared before the entrenchments a Cossack envoy waving a white flag, blowing upon his trumpet and crying out not to shoot at him.

The sentinuels admitted him at once.

"I come from the hetman to Prince Yeremy," he said to them.

The prince had not yet dismounted, and was on the walls, his face bright as heaven. The fires were reflected in his eyes and made a rosy halo about his delicate white face. When the Cossack stood before the prince he lost his power of speech, his legs trembled, and ants seemed to be crawling over his body although he was an experienced soldier and had come as an envoy.

"Who are you?" asked the prince in a quiet tone.

"I am Captain Sokol. . . . sent by the hetman."

"And what is your message?"

The captain bowed his head several times as low as the stirrups of the prince.

"Pardon me, Prince, I repeat what I was commanded to say; I am innocent."

"Speak boldly."

"The hetman commanded me to announce to you that he came as a guest to Zbaraj and intends to visit you at the castle to-morrow."

"Tell him that not to-morrow, but to-day, I give a feast in the castle," answered the prince.

Indeed an hour later the cannons thundered forth salutes, shouts of joy were heard, and the windows of the palace were illumined by thousands of gleaming lights.

When the Khan heard the vivats and the sound of the kettledrums and trumpets, he stepped out in front of his tent in company with his brother Nur-ed-Din, the sultana Galga, Tukhay Bey, and many murzas, and sent for Khmyelnitski.

The hetman, though somewhat intoxicated, appeared at once, and bowing and placing his fingers on his forehead, on his chin, and on his breast, he awaited thepleasure of the Khan.

For a long time the Khan gazed at the brightly-illumined

palace shining in the distance and nodded his head, then he ran his fingers through his thin beard falling in two locks over his fur shuba and pointing to the shining windows, asked:

"Hetman of the Zaporojians, what is going on there?"

"Mighty Tsar," answered Khmyelnitski, "Prince Yeremy is giving a feast."

The Khan was astonished.

"He is feasting?"

"It is a funeral feast," answered Khmyelnitski, "for to-morrow they will all be dead."

Meanwhile fresh salvos arose from the castle and the sounds of trumpets and confused shouts shouts reached the Khan's ears.

"La Allah ila Allah," murmured the Khan, "this Giaour has a lion heart."

After a short silence he added:

"I would rather be with him than with you."

Khmyelnitski trembled. He had paid dearly already for the indispensable friendship of the Tartars, but he was not sure of his terrible ally. The slightest whim of the Khan would turn the horde against the Cossacks and irretrievably ruin them. Khmyelnitski knew that the Khan was only lending his aid for the sake of booty, gifts, and captives, and that he regarded himself as a legitimate monarch, he blushed inwardly that he was supporting an uprising against a king, and that he was an accomplice of a Khmyelnitski against such a Vishnyovyetski.

The Cossack commander often filled himself with drink not only from force of habit but from despair. . . .

"Great monarch," he cried, "Yeremy is our enemy. He has driven the Tartars from the Trans-Dieper, he has hung murzas like wolves upon the trees in order to spread terror, he intended to ravage the Crimea with fire and sword."

"And you? have you committed no depredations in the ulusas?" asked the Khan.

"I am your slave."

Tukhay Bey's blue lips began to tremble and his eyes flashed. He had a deadly enemy among the Cossacks, who once upon a time had destroyed and beaten down a whole chambul and he himself had almost perished. The name of that man forced itself with the power of hateful recollections to the lips of the murza; he could not restrain himself and hissed out "Burlay! Burlay!"

"Tukhay Bey," said Khmyelnitski, "you and Burlay at the exalted and wise command of the Khan poured water on your blades last year."

A new salvo from the castle interrupted their discourse.

The Khan extended his hand and described a circle, enclosing in it Zbaraj, the castle, and the entrenchments. "Will all that be mine to-morrow?" asked he addressing Khmyelnitski.

"To-morrow, they must all die," answered Khmyelnitski, his eyes glued upon the castle.

Then he bowed again, and touched with his hand his brow and chin and breast, considering the interview closed.

The Khan wrapped himself in his fur, for the July night was quite cool and turning towards the tent said:

"It is late . . . "

All nodded, while the Khan deep in thought went slowly to his tent murmuring in a low voice "La Allah ila Allah."

Khmyelnitski proceeded towards his own tent muttering to himself on the way: "The castle, the town, the booty, and the captives I leave to you; but Yeremy belongs to me, even should I have to pay for him with my neck."

Gradually the fires began to die down. Gradually the dull murmur of hundreds of thousands of voices died away; here and there might be heard the sound of pipes, or the shouting of the Tartar herdsmen as they drove horses to pasture during the night; after a while however these sounds became still, and sleep reigned over the countless legions of Cossacks and Tartars.

Only in the castle was there a sound of revelry, as if a wedding were being celebrated there. In the camp it was generally expected that the storm would break on the morrow. Indeed, a throng of Cossacks, Tartars, and other wild warriors advanced from Khmyelnitski at an early hour towards the entrenchments like dark clouds enveloping the summit of a mountain. The soldiers who on the preceding day had been unable to count the camp-fires were now astonished at the sight of this sea of heads. This was not yet an attack, but an examination of the field, the ramparts, the trenches and the entire Polish encampment. And as a swelling wave of the ocean driven by the wind from afar approaches the shore, surges, foams with rage, strikes with a roar and then recedes into the distance, so they made an attack, here and there, receding and advancing again as if

wishing to test the enemy's power of resistance and to convince themselves that the mere sight of their numbers would crush the spirit of the enemy before they destroyed its body.

They opened fire also and the balls fell thickly about the camp, which quickly responded with lively volleys. Now there appeared upon the ramparts a procession bearing the most Holy Sacrament in order to encourage the soldiers. The priest Mukhovietski bore the golden Pix, raising it with both hands before his face and sometimes high aloft. He walked beneath an embroidered canopy, his face bore the marks of asceticism, his eyes were closed, and upon his head he wore a hood. Beside him walked two priests who supported him under the elbows—Yaskolski the chaplain of the hussars, formerly a famous soldier and well-versed in the art of war, the other Jabkovski was also an ex-soldier, a gigantic monk of St. Bernard and second in strength throughout the whole camp only to Longin. The poles of the canopy was carried by four noblemen, one of whom was Zagloba, and they were preceeded by little girls with sweet faces who scattered flowers. The procession marched over the entire length of the ramparts and after it marched the officers of the army. The soldiers, when they beheld the shining pix, the calm faces of the priests and the girls dressed in their white garments, felt their hearts swell and became filled with enthusiasm. The wind scattered the powerful odor of burning myrrh in the censers, and the heads of all were bowed in humility. Mukhovietski raised the pix aloft from time to time and elevating his eyes towards heaven intoned the hymn beginning "Before such a great Sacrament."

The powerful voices of Yaskolski and Jabkovski continued "We fall on our faces!" and soon the entire army swelled the chant "Let the old law give way to the new." The deep bass of the cannon accompanied the hymn and at times hissing cannon-balls flew over the canopy or fell within the ramparts, frightening Zagloba, who squeezed himself close to the canopy-post. Especially did fear overcome him when the procession halted for prayer. At such times the whizzing of the cannon-balls could be distinctly heard flying overhead like great birds in a flock. Zagloba grew more red in the face, and chaplain Yaskolski looking aside over the field murmured to himself "they are only fit to tend chickens and should not meddle with cannon." Indeed the Cossacks had very poor gunners and he as an old soldier could not calmly

bear the sight of this poor markmanship and waste of powder. Again the procession moved on until it arrived at the other end of the ramparts where there was no great pressure from the enemy. After the Cossacks and Tartars had attempted again and again to strike terror and panic among the besieged, they finally withdrew to their own positions and remained there. Meantime the procession had strengthened the hearts of the besieged.

It was evident that Khmyelnitski was awaiting the arrival of his wagon-train. He seemed to be so sure of capturing the fort at the first assault that he scarcely had any trenches made for the cannon and raised no other earthworks to defend himself from the besieged. The wagon-train arrived on the following day and arranged themselves in several tens of rows of wagons stretching from Vernyakov to Denbina a distance of about one mile. With it also arrived reinforcements, first of which were the splendid Zaporojian infantry, who could almost be compared to the Turkish janissaries, and who were far better adapted to make an assault than the Tartars or the rest of the "blacks" about Zbaraj.

Tuesday, July 13th, was passed in feverish preparations on both sides. There was no doubt that the assault had been ordered, for trumpets and kettledrums sounded the alarm from early morning among the Cossacks, while in the Tartars' camp the great sacred drum, called the Balt, rolled like thunder. Evening fell clear and calm; but from the lakes and the Gniezna light fogs arose—at length the first star twinkled in the sky.

At once sixty Cossack cannons belched forth smoke and flame with a simultaneous roar. Countless legions rushed with frightful yells towards the walls—the assault had begun.

To the soldiers standing on the ramparts, the earth appeared to tremble beneath their feet. The oldest veterans could recall no such scene.

"Jesus Maria! what is that!" asked Zagloba standing beside Skshetuski in a breach between the ramparts giving orders to his hussars, "these are not men that are coming against us."

"You know that they are not men; the enemy are driving oxen ahead so that we may waste our powder first upon them."

The old nobleman grew red as a beet, his eyes started from their sockets, and one word forced its way through his lips which expressed his feelings at the moment "scoundrels."

The oxen, urged on with clubs and burning brands by the wild herdsmen, became mad through fear. They rushed forward with a terrible bellowing, now crowding each other, now hurrying on, now scattering and turning backward; urged by shouts and scourged with raw hides they surged up to the ramparts. Now Vurtsel made his cannons speak, smoke filled the air, the sky became red as scarlet, the frightened beasts scattered as if dispersed by lightning, half of them falling to the ground while the enemy marched over their bodies.

Captives driven by spears and firebrands ran ahead with sand bags with which to fill the trenches. These were peasants from the neighborhood of Zbaraj who had not had time to flee into the town before the enemy arrived, among them were men both old and young, and also women. They ran along weeping, shrieking, and their hands outstretched towards heaven, praying for mercy. That wailing made the hair stand on end but compassion was dead at that moment; from the rear the spears of the Cossacks threatened them, in front Vurtsel's cannon-balls crushed them, grape-shot tore them to pieces and made long furrows amid the rows of these wretched ones; they ran ahead wading in blood, stumbling, rising again, and rushing onward, with a vast pack of Cossacks, Turks, and Tartars close upon their heels.

The fosse was soon filled with corpses, blood and sandbags, soon it was even with the ground and the enemy rushed over with shouts and yells.

One regiment pushed on after the other; by the light of the cannon flashes the officers could be seen driving with their batons fresh masses against the ramparts. The picked troops assaulted the quarters and soldiers of Prince Yeremy, for Khmyelnitski knew well that there would be the greatest resistance. First the soldiers from Sich, behind them the terrible Pereyaslav legions under Loboda, besides these Vorochenko led a regiment of Circassians, Kuak led the Karovovsk regiment, Nechay the Bratlav, Stepka, the Uman, Mrozoyetski the Korsun; there were also the Kalnik and the powerful division of Byalotserkiev, fifteen thousand men, and with them Khmyelnitski looking as red as Satan amid the fires, his breast open and exposed to the shots of the enemy, with the eye of an eagle and the face of a lion, amid all the chaos, smoke, confusion of battle, and flames, planning everything, ordering everything.

Behind the Cossacks came the wild Don Cossacks then the Circassians armed with knives; near by Tukhay Bey led picked troops of Nogais, after them came the Subagazi Byalogrod Tartars, followed by Kurdluk swarthy Astrakhans armed with gigantic bows, and arrows. They followed one another so closely that the hot breath of those behind were felt by those in front of them.

Who can tell or describe how many fell ere they reached the trench filled with the bodies of captives. But they reached it, crossed it, and began to climb the ramparts. It seemed as if this night, bright with stars, was the night of Judgment. Cannon balls which flew over the heads of the nearer, ploughed into the farther ranks. Bombs, with hellish hissing noises, described fiery arcs in the darkness, making the darkest of night as light as day. The German and Polish infantry with the dismounted dragoons of the prince at their side poured fire and lead upon the faces and breasts of the Cossacks.

The front ranks desired to retreat, but pushed from behind, they could not. Thus they fell on the spot. Blood spouted beneath the feet of those that advanced. The ramparts grew slippery; feet, hands, and breasts slid from them. The men clambering up, slid off, climbed up again to be enveloped in clouds of smoke, blackened with soot, stabbed, beaten, but disregarding death and wounds. Here and there hand to hand combats took place. Men could be seen as though possessed and maddened with rage grinding their teeth and with faces covered with blood. . . The survivors fought over the quivering bodies of the dead and dying. Commands could no longer be heard, they were drowned in the terrible general uproar that merged all sounds, the thunder of guns, the groans of the wounded and the hissing of the grenades.

The terrible struggle wherein no quarter was given lasted for hours. About the rampart another was formed by corpses, which hindered the assailants. The Sich Cossacks were almost butchered to a man, the Pereyaslav regiment lay in rows about the rampart. The Karkovsk, Bratslav and Uman divisions were decimated—still others pressed forward, pushed from behind by the guard of the hetman, the Rumelian Turks and Tartars of Urumbey. Now confusion rose amid the ranks of the assailants, for the Polish infantry, the Germans, and the dragoons did not yield a step. Panting,

covered with blood, streaming with sweat, half mad with the smell of blood, they flung themselves one after another upon the enemy like raging wolves upon a flock of sheep. At this moment Khmyelnitski pressed forward with the remnants of the first divisions and with his fresh forces of Byalotserkiev; Tartars, Turks, and Circassians. The cannons ceased thundering, bombs whizzed no more, hand weapons alone made themselves heard along the western rampart. Shouting commenced anew. At last even the firing of muskets ceased. Darkness enveloped the combatants. No eye could see what was taking place but something was rolling along in the darkness like a gigantic body quivering in convulsions, it was impossible to tell from the cries which arose whether they were cries of triumph or despair. At times even these ceased and then nothing could be heard save one immense and horrible groan from all sides as if it issued from beneath the earth and from its surface into the air higher and higher as if the souls of the fallen were flying aloft and groaning over the battle-field.

But these were but occasional pauses, after which the uproar and howls grew louder and the unearthly noise of combat became fiercer and more terrible.

Again was heard the crackle of muskets, for Major Makhnitski with the rest of the infantry came up to the aid of the exhausted regiments. In the rear ranks of the enemy the trumpets sounded a retreat.

There was a pause in the combat, the Cossacks retreated about a furlong from the ramparts and placed themselves under the protection of their cannon; but within half an hour Khmyelnitski drove them for the third time to the assault.

Now Prince Yeremy appeared on the ramparts. It was easy to recognize him, for the pennon and bunchuk, insignia of the hetman's rank, waved above his head, while before and behind him were borne flaring torches, making a blood red glare. Soon the enemy's cannon were belching at him, but the artillery-men aimed badly and the balls flew high above him, beyond the Gniezna, while he stood calmly and surveyed the approaching masses.

The Cossacks slackened their pace as if dazzled by the sight of him. A murmur like the quick whisper of the breeze swept through their ranks.

"Yeremy! Yeremy!"

On the rampart in the glare of the blood-red torches the

prince appeared to them like a fabulous giant in folk lore.

A tremor ran through their weary limbs and their hands made the sign of the cross.

But Yeremy stood still. He waved his golden baton and at once a swarm of death-dealing bombs hurtled through the air and fell into the enemy's ranks. Like a wounded dragon the dense mass writhed and a cry of terror was heard from one end of the line to the other.

"Forward! Forward!" shouted the Cossack colonels.

The dark mass rushed at full speed towards the ramparts beneath which was shelter from the bombs. But they had not made half the distance when the prince, who was clearly visible, turned towards the west and again waved his baton.

At the signal the cavalry moved forward from beside the pond, out of the gap between it and the rampart, and immediately poured out on the plain. By the light of the bombs could be recognized the great banners of Skshetuski's and Zatsvilikhovski's hussars, the dragoons of Kushel and Volodiyovski and the Tartars of the prince under Rostvorovski. They were followed by fresh regiments of Semenovs and Wallachians under Bychov. Not only Khmyelnitski, but even the last camp-follower of the Cossacks, recognized in a flash that the audacious prince was going to hurl his entire cavalry upon the enemy's flank.

At once trumpets in the lines of the assailants sounded a retreat. "Front face to the cavalry! front face to the cavalry!" voices of command exclaimed in alarm. Simultaneously Khmyelnitski endeavored to change his front and to place cavalry against cavalry. But it was too late. Ere he was able to form his cavalry the squadrons of the prince came rushing as if on wings shouting their battle cry "Strike! Kill!" Banners rustled, plumes waved, and iron weapons clashed. The hussars with their lances hurled themselves upon the wall of the enemy like a hurricane and bore everything before them. No human power, no command, no leader, could hold the infantry against which the first attack was directed. Wild panic seized the picked guard of the hetman. The soldiers of Byalotserkiev threw away their muskets, spears, swords, daggers, and scythes, and shielding their heads with their hands, they rushed in blind terror and roaring like beasts against the Tartars in the rear. The Tartars however received them with a rain of bullets and arrows, so they threw themselves upon the flank and ran

along the wagon-train under the constant fire of the infantry and the cannons of Vurtsel, leaving behind them such a great crowd of corpses that they lay one on top of the other.

Now the wild Tukhay Bey together with Subagazi and Urum Murzas pressed like mad upon the advancing hussars. He did not hope to break their power but simply wished to delay them in order to win time for the Silistrian and Rumelian Janissaries to form into squares and to protect the Byalotserkiev men from the first panic. As if he were a common Tartar and not a chief he rushed at the enemy in the van of his troops and fought desperately, exposing himself to dangers with the rest. The curved swords of the Nogais clashed upon armor and breast plates, and the howl of the warriors drowned all other sounds. But they could not hold their ground. Forced from their position by the terrible attacks of the iron horsemen against whom they were unaccustomed to stand with open front, they were driven back towards the Janissaries, thrown from their saddles, hacked with long sabres, pierced through, beaten and crushed like poisonous reptiles, they still defended themselves with such furious valor that they did actually check the onset of the hussars. Tukhay Bey raged like a destroying flame and the Nogais kept close at his side, like wolves following a she-wolf.

Still they had to give way, leaving more and more corpses behind them. When thundering cries of "Allah!" announced that the Janissaries had formed, Skshetuski threw himself upon the raging Tukhay Bey and struck him upon the head with his sword. But whether the knight had not yet regained his strength after his illness, or whether the helmet of Damascus steel withstood the blow, the blade bent on Tukhay Bey's head and was shattered to fragments.

Tukhay Bey closed his eyes and fell into the arms of his Nogais who escaped with their chief amid the general uproar like clouds scudding before wind. The entire cavalry of the prince was now fronting the Rumelian and Silistrian janissaries and the Mohammedan Serbians who together with the janissaries had formed an immense square and were slowly retreating towards the wagon-train with their front to the enemy, bristling with muskets, spears, javelins, battle-axes, and swords.

The squadrons of heavy dragoon and the Semenovs of the prince rushed like a whirlwind upon the square; at their

head, with great noise and rattle of sabres rode Skshetuski's hussars. He himself rushed on in the van and beside him rode Longin upon his Livonian mare, his terrible broadsword "Cowl-trencher" held aloft.

A red band of flame flew from one end of the quadrangle to the other, bullets whistled about the ears of the riders, here and there a man groaned or a horse fell, but still they chased ahead. Now they neared the enemy and the Janissaries can distinctly hear the snorting and blown breath of the horses. The square is formed more closely and a wall of spears is inclined against the onrushing horses. As many points as there were in that cloud, so many knights were threatened.

Just then a gigantic hussar rushes with tremendous speed upon the wall of the square; for a moment the forefeet of the frantic horse rise in the air, then steed and rider fall upon the crowded mass, overturning men, splintering spears, and spreading destruction.

As an eagle swoops upon a flock of white partridges which crowd together in terror and become easy prey, and are torn to pieces with beak and talon, so Pan Longin Podbipyenta swooped upon the enemy and raged with his "Cowl-trencher." A cloudburst could not create greater havoc in a young and dense forest than did he among the throng of Janissaries. He was terrible. His form assumed superhuman proportions; his horse seemed to transform itself into a dragon snorting flame from its nostrils. Kisler-Bak, a gigantic aga, threw himself upon him, but fell cut in two. In vain did the strongest men attempt to check him with their spears, they fell as if struck by lightning. He trampled upon them, forced himself into the densest throng, and whenever he wielded his mighty sword it seemed as if corn were falling beneath the scythe. The crowd thinned out about him; one could hear yells, groans, the thunder of blows, the crash of steel upon the helmets and the snorting of the hellish mare.

"A Div! A Div!"[1] shouted terrified voices.

At this moment the iron mass of hussars with Skshetuski at its head rushed through the breach made by the Lithuanian knight, the walls of the square burst like those of a falling house; the throngs of Janissaries took to flight in every direction.

It was just in the nick of time, for the Nogais under Su-

[1] Devil.

bagazi were now returning to the battle like bloodthirsty wolves, and on the other side Khmyelnitski had rallied the Byalotserkiev men and was hurrying to the aid of the janissaries; but now there was general confusion. Cossacks, Tartars, Mussulmen, Janissaries, without offering the slightest resistance, fled in wild terror towards the wagon-train. The cavalry pursued them, hewing down everything in the way. Those who had not fallen in the first assault perished now. The pursuit was so hot that the squadrons rushed ahead of the rear ranks of the fugitives and their hands grew weary from cutting and slashing. The flying men threw away their weapons, flags, caps, and even their coats. The white caps of the janissaries covered the field like snowflakes. The entire picked force of Khmyelnitski's infantry, the cavalry and artillery, as well as the Tartar and Turkish auxiliary forces formed one disorderly mass, senseless, wild, and blind with fright. Entire companies fled before single officers. The hussars having scattered the infantry and cavalry, had done their work; now the dragoons and light squadrons rushed in, and Volodiyovski and Kushel did incredible mischief. The battle field became a great sea of blood which splashed like water beneath the hoofs of the horses and besprinkled the armor and faces of the knights.

The fleeing crowds only drew breath when they reached the centre of the wagon-train and the trumpets of the prince's cavalry sounded a retreat.

The knights returned singing and shouting in triumph, and counting on their way with bloody swords the corpses of the enemy. But who could estimate at a glance the extent of the defeat? Who could count all that had perished when in the trench alone the bodies were heaped up to the height of a man? The soldiers were almost overcome by the smell of blood and sweat. Fortunately quite a strong breeze blew from the lakes and carried the odors to the enemy's tents.

Thus ended the first encounter between the terrible Yeremy and Khmyelnitski.

But the end of the storm was not yet, for while Vishnyovyetski repulsed the attacks directed against the right wing of the camp, Burlay had almost made himself master of the entrenchments. He had surorunded the town and castle with his warriors from the region beyond the Dnieper and had pushed on to the eastern lake and fiercely attacked Firley's quarters. The Hungarian infantry division stationed

there were unable to withstand the attack, for the entrenchments at the pond were not yet finished; the first company fled from the banner and was soon followed by the entire regiment. Burlay rode at full speed to the centre, followed by his men like an irresistible torrent. The shouts of victory were heard at the opposite end of the camp. The Cossacks who pursued the fleeing Hungarians, crushed a small division of cavalry, took several cannon, and had almost reached the quarters of the Castellan of Belsk when Pshiyenski at the head of several German companies rushed to the rescue. Striking down the flag-bearer with a single thrust he seized the flag and threw himself with it upon the enemy. The Germans closed with the Cossacks and a terrible hand-to-hand combat ensued, in which on one side fought with fury the crushing numbers of Burlay's forces and on the other the courage of the old lions of the Thirty Years War. In vain did Burlay like a wounded boar charge into the densest ranks of the combatants. Neither the scorn of death nor the fierceness with which the Cossacks fought, could check the Germans, who pressed upon the Zaporojians with such force that they swept them from their places, scattered them, and after a half-hour's struggle, drove them beyond the entrenchments.

Pshiyemski, covered with blood, planted the flag upon the half-finished rampart.

Burlay was now placed in a terrible position. He was forced to retreat by the same road on which he had come; and since Prince Yeremy had already crushed those who had attacked the right wing, he could now with great ease cut off the retreat of Burlay's division. And though Myrozovitski at the head of the Korsun Cossack cavalry came to his aid, at the same moment Konyetspolski's hussars supported by those of Skshetuski, returning from the attack upon the Janissaries, fell upon Burlay who had been retreating in order.

One shock scattered Burlay's forces in all directions, and a terrible slaughter ensued. Cut off from retreat to the wagon-train, death alone remained for the Cossacks. Some without asking for quarter, defended thmselves singly or in small groups with the fury of despair. Others in vain stretched imploring hands towards the cavalry that was thundering like a tempest over the field. Then began pursuit and a search for enemies who had hidden themselves in holes or

in uneven places in the ground. In order to light the battle-field, burning barrels of tar were rolled down from the entrenchments, resembling blazing meteors with fiery tails, as they fell. By their red light the remainder of the Trans-Dnieper horde were destroyed. Subagazi who had on that day performed marvels of valor, flew to the aid, but the valiant Marek Sobieski, the chief of Krasnostavsk, stopped him as a lion stops a wild buffalo. Burlay saw now that all was lost. But he loved his Cossack honor more than life and did not attempt to escape. Others fled in the darkness, hid in clefts, crept away between the feet of horses; he alone still sought the enemy. He struck down Pan Dombka, Pan Rusietski and the young hero Pan Aksak, who had won undying fame at Konstantinov. Then his sword cleft Pan Savitski and struck down two winged hussars together; finally, like a flame of fire, he rushed towards a huge nobleman whom he had noticed rushing over the battle-field bellowing like a bull.

Zagloba, for it was he, bellowed still louder from terror and spurred his horse to flight. His few remaining locks stood up like oaks with fright, but he did not lose his presence of mind; on the contrary he was meditating stratagems which flashed like lightning through his mind. He spurred onwards towards a dense throng of horsemen and cried out "Gentlemen, whoever believes in God!" . . . Then he spurred like a tempest towards the thick mass of cavalry. But Burlay rushed at him from one side to head him off. Zagloba closed his eyes and said to himself: "I shall perish now, I and my fleas." He heard the snorting of the horse behind him, saw that no one was coming to his help, that escape was impossible, and that no hand but his own could save him from Burlay.

In this moment of agony his terror suddenly turned into rage, he bellowed more fearfully than a wild aurochs, and wheeling his horse he turned against his pursuer.

"I am Zagloba!" he cried, flourishing his sword in the air.

Just then a fresh lot of tar-barrels were rolled from the ramparts. In the bright gleam Burlay gazed upon Zagloba and was astounded. Not at hearing his name, however, for that he had never heard before, but that he recognized him as the man whom he had entertained in Yampol as Bohun's friend.

But that unfortunate start of surprise was the ruin of the

brave chief of the Zaporojians, for ere he could collect himself, Zagloba landed such a blow upon his temple that he fell lifeless to the earth.

This happened in view of the entire army. Shouts of joy from the hussars were answered by shouts of terror from the Cossacks, who when they beheld the death of this old lion of the Black Sea, completely lost spirit and attempted no further resistance. Those whom Subagazi could not rescue perished to the last man, for no prisoners were taken on that terrible night. Subagazi fled towards the wagon-train pursued by the Starosta of Krasnostavsk and the light cavalry. The attack all along the line of entrenchments was repulsed. No opposition was met on the way and only about the wagon-train did the pursuing cavalry find work to do.

Shouts of triumph and joy resounded over the entire camp of the besieged, and mighty cries filled the air and ascended towards heaven. The blood-spattered, perspiring, dusty, powder-blackened soldiers stood leaning upon their weapons, their faces were lowering, their brows still frowning, their eyes still flashing, panting, but ready to fight again if necessary. Slowly the cavalry also returned from its bloody harvest at the train. Then the prince himself appeared upon the battle-field and with him the commanders, the royal standard bearer Marek, Sobieski and Pshiyemski. The brilliant procession moved slowly along the trenches.

"Long live Yeremy!' cried the army, "long live our father!"

The prince bowed with uncovered head and waved his field-marshal's baton on every side.

"I thank you, gentlemen, I thank you!" he exclaimed in his clear, bell-like voice.

Then he turned to Pan Pshiyemski:

"This trench is too big," said he.

Pshiyemski nodded his head in sign of affirmation.

Thus the victorious leaders rode along the entire line from the eastern to the western lake, inspecting the battle-field and the damages done to the ramparts by the enemy.

Behind the prince's retinue enthusiastic soldiers bore Zagloba on their shoulders to the camp as the hero of the day.

Twenty strong arms lifted the portly figure of the warrior on high; while he, greatly excited, red, perspiring and waving his arms lest he should lose his balance, cried out with all his force:

"Ha! I peppered him, purposely I feigned flight to draw

him on. This dog-brother will bark at us no more. Gentlemen, I had to give an example to the younger men. . . . For God's sake be careful or you will let me fall, hold me tight, do you hear? . . . believe me, I had my hands full with him. All sorts of rascals fought with noblemen to-day, but they got their deserts. . . . Be careful! let me down! The Devil! . . . "

"Long life to him! long life to him!" shouted the nobles.

"Take him to the prince," cried others.

"Long life to him! Long life to him!"

Meantime the Zaporojian hetman rushed into his camp roaring like a wounded beast, tore his coat from his breast and tore his own face. The chiefs who had escaped from the battle surrounded him in gloomy silence, and spoke no word of consolation. He was almost bereft of his senses; he foamed at the mouth and tore his hair with both hands.

"Where are my regiments, my warriors?" he repeated in a hoarse voice. "What will the Khan say, what will Tukhay Bey? Give me up to Yeremy, let him impale me on the stake."

The chiefs maintained silence.

"Why did the soothsayers predict victory?" roared the hetman, "off with their heads. Why did they say that I should take Yeremy captive?"

Heretofore when the roaring of this lion had terrorized the entire camp, the captains had preserved a respectful silence; but now that he was defeated, trampled upon, and forsaken by fortune, his plight made the officers insolent.

"You can never conquer Yeremy," muttered Stepka.

"You are the cause of your own ruin and of ours," added Mrozovitski.

The hetman rushed at him like a tiger.

"And who was the conqueror at Zolta Woda, who at Korsum, and at Pilavyets?"

"You," answered Voronchenko harshly, "but Vishnyovyetski was not there."

Khmyelnitski began to tear his hair.

"I promised the Khan that he should sleep in the castle to-night," howled he, in despair.

Then Kulak spoke: "What you have promised the Khan concerns your own head. Keep it. Beware lest you lose it. . . . But do not drive us again to the assault; do not destroy soldiers of God. Put up ramparts against the Poles, trenches before the cannon, or woe unto you."

"Woe unto you!" repeated gloomy voices.

"Woe unto you," answered Khmyelnitski.

Thus they murmured and rumbled like thunder clouds. At length Khmyelnitski staggered and fell upon a divan covered with sheepskins in a corner of the tent. The captains surrounded him with gloomy brows and in deep silence. At length the hetman called out hoarsely: "Gorzalka!"

"You shall not drink," shouted Vyhovski, "the Khan will send for you."

The Khan was about a mile distant from the battle-field and knew nothing of what had transpired. The night was still and warm, and he sat by his tent among the agas and servants eating dates from a silver dish, and awaiting news. At times he gazed up at the starlit sky, and murmured "Mohammed Rassul Allah!" (Mohammed the messenger of God.)

At this moment Subagazi came riding up at full speed on a foaming horse, breathless and covered with blood; leaping from his saddle, he hurried up to the Khan and bowed low.

"Speak," said the Khan with a mouthful of dates.

The words burned like flames in the mouth of Subagazi but he dared not speak without first repeating the customary titles. He began therefore, making constant obeisances, to speak in the following manner:

"Almighty Khan of all the hordes, Grandson of Mohammed, Absolute Sovereign, All-wise Monarch, Fortunate Lord, Lord of the tree that gives shade from sunrise to sunset, Lord of the blooming tree . . . "

The Khan waved his hand to check the flow of words. He noticed that there was blood on the face of Subagazi and that pain and despair were in his eyes. He spat the half-chewed dates into his hand and gave them to one of his mullahs, who accepted them as a mark of extraordinary honor, and began to eat them. Then the Khan said:

"Speak quickly Subagazi has the camp of the infidels been taken?"

"God has not granted it."

"The Poles?"

"Are victors."

"Khmyelnitski?"

"Defeated."

"And Tukhay Bey?"

"Wounded."

"There is but one God," said the Khan, "how many true believers have gone to Paradise?"

Subagazi raised his eyes and pointed with his blood-stained hand to the sky. "As many as there are lights on Allah's Heaven," he answered solemnly.

The Khan's fat face grew purple, he almost burst with rage.

"Where is that dog," said he, "who promised me that I should sleep to-night in the castle? Where is that venomous serpent whom God will crush beneath my feet? Let him come here and give an account of the splendid promises he made."

Several murzas at once departed to find Khmyelnitski. By degrees the Khan grew calmer and finally he said:

"There is but one God."

Then he turned to Subagazi.

"Subagazi," said he, "there is blood upon your face."

"It is the blood of unbelievers," replied the warrior.

"Tell how you have shed it, rejoice our ears by telling of the bravery of the faithful."

Then Subagazi began to describe the battle in detail, praising especially the bravery of Tukhay Bey, of Galgi and Nured-Din. Nor did he fail to mention Khmyelnitski likewise, praising him as he did the others, and ascribing the disaster only to the will of God and to the fury of the infidels. One circumstance in the narrative impressed itself upon the Khan, and that was that at the beginning of the battle no shots were fired upon the Tartars, and that the Prince's cavalry had only charged upon them when the Tartars stood directly in their way.

"Allah! they did not want to fight with me," said the Khan, "but now it is too late. . . . "

And this indeed was the case. Prince Yeremy at the beginning of the battle had forbidden his soldiers to fire upon the Tartars, in order to instill in them that negotiations were going on with the Khan and that his hordes were standing beside the rebels only for the sake of appearances. Later, circumstances had forced an encounter with the Tartars.

The Khan nodded his head and deliberated within himself whether it would not be better to turn his arms against Khmyelnitski, but suddenly the hetman stood before him.

Khmyelnitski was now calm, and approached the Khan with head held high and a bold look. Craft and daring were expressed in his face.

"Approach, you traitor!" said the Khan.

"The hetman of the Cossacks approaches you, and no traitor, but your faithful ally to whom you pledged your aid under any circumstances," said Khmyelnitski.

"Go, pass the night in the castle, drag the Poles from the trenches by their hair as you promised."

"Great Khan of all the hordes," answered Khmyelnitski, in a solemn voice, "you are mighty, and except the Sultan, the mightiest on earth; you are wise and powerful, but can you shoot an arrow up to the stars, or fathom the depth of the sea?"

The Khan gazed at him in astonishment.

"You cannot," continued Khmyelnitski in a voice growing in volume, "and so I could not fathom the unfathomable pride and daring of Yeremy. How could I divine that your mere name would not terrify him into subjection, that the sight of you would not humble him to submissiveness, and that he would dare to raise his insolent hand against you, and to shed the blood of your warriors, and to insult you, mighty monarch, as well as the least of your murzas? Had I ventured to harbor such a thought I should have dishonored you whom I love and reverence."

"Allah!" said the Khan, more and more astonished.

"But this much I wish to tell you," continued Khmyelnitski, with increasing assurance in voice and manner, "you are great and mighty, from the east to the west nations and monarchs do homage to you and call you 'the Lion,' Yeremy alone does not bow his head to the dust before your beard. If you therefore do not destroy him, if you do not bend his neck and ride on his back, where is your glory and your honor? Men will say that a simply Polish prince has dishonored the Tsar of the Crimea and has escaped punishment —and that he is greater and mightier than you."

A profound silence followed; the chiefs and agas looked upon the face of the Khan as upon the sun and held their breath, the latter had his eyes closed and was lost in thought.

Khmyelnitski leaned upon his baton and waited confidently.

"You have said it," exclaimed the Khan at last. "I will humble Yeremy and will ride on his back so that no one from the east to the west can say that an infidel dog has disgraced me."

"God is great!" came as one voice from the murzas.

Khmyelnitski's eyes shone with joy. With one stroke he had warded off the destruction hanging over his head, and from a dobtful ally he had formed one who could be implicitly trusted. In case of emergency the lion knew how to transform itself into a serpent.

Both camps until late at night were active as a swarm of bees, while on the battle-field the torn and mangled warriors slept the sleep that knows no waking. The moon rose and started on her course over the immense graveyard, and was reflected in the pools of congealed blood, revealing at every moment new heaps of slain, looked into their open, glassy eyes, lighted their bluish faces, the fragments of shattered weapons, and the corpses of horses—her rays grew fainter as if paling at the sight. Here and there ominous groups appeared upon the field, these were servants and camp-followers who had come to rob the slain, as jackals steal after lions. . . . Superstitious fear drove them finally from the field. A dread mystery hung about that field strewn with corpses, about the silence and stillness of those motionless figures not long before human beings, and in the still peacefullness with which the dead Poles, Turks, Tartars, and Cossacks lay side by side. At times the wind rustled in the bushes that grew in spots over the field and it seemed to the sentinels as if this rustle was caused by the souls of the fallen which were circling above their corpses. It was even rumored that when the clock struck the midnight hour from Zbaraj, on a sudden over the whole field there were sounds as if great flocks of birds were rising in the air. Wailing voices, deep sighs, and hollow groans were also heard, making the hair stand up on the head. Those who were yet to perish in this struggle and whose ears were more sensitive to supernatural voices, distinctly heard the heavenward-rising souls of the Poles making supplications "Before Thine eyes, O Lord! we lay down our sins," while the souls of the Cossacks groaned "Christ, Christ, be merciful." For those that had fallen in this fratricidal war could not hasten at once to the eternal life. It was their fate to remain in the outer darkness and to hover in the wind over this vale of tears, to weep and lament by night until they should obtain of God forgiveness for their guilt and obtain at last peace and pardon for their sins at the feet of Christ.

But in those days men hardened their hearts and no Angel of Peace flew over the battle-field.

CHAPTER III.

On the following morning ere the sun had flashed its golden rays over the sky, new entrenchments surrounded the Polish camp. The former had covered too much space; it was difficult to defend them and to render mutual assistance. The prince and Pan Pshiyemski had decided therefore to enclose the troops within narrower entrenchments. All night long they had worked steadily, the hussars as well as the other divisions; it was not until three o'clock in the morning that sleep closed the eyes of the tired knights, and all except the sentries slept; for the enemy also was working all through the night and attempted to make no assault after yesterday's defeat. It was not expected that an attack would be made upon this day.

Skshetuski, Pan Longin and Zagloba sat in their tent drinking beer in small mugs thickened with crumbs of cheese, and diverted themselves in talking over the battle with that satisfaction with which every soldier talks over a recent victory.

"I am in the habit of going to sleep at milking-time in the evening and of rising when they are milking in the morning, the way the ancients did," said Zagloba, "but in war time that would not do; sleep when you have a chance and rise when you are awakened. It angers me to think that we are being disturbed on account of such a mob of rascals, but it can't be helped, in such times as these. Anyhow we paid them out yesterday, if we give them a couple more such receptions they will take care not to wake us."

"Do you know how many of our men have fallen?" asked Longin.

"O, not many, and, as is always the case, more fall of the assailants than of the besieged. You don't understand such matters as well as I do, because you have not been in so many wars. But we old veterans don't have to count the dead, we can estimate by watching the course of the battle."

"I shall attempt to learn all this from you gentlemen," said Longin mildly.

"Certainly you can if you have sufficient wit, but I doubt this fact."

"Oh, let him alone," interrupted Skshetuski. "Longin has seen war before, and God grant that our best knights perform such deeds as his of yesterday."

"I did as well as I could," said the Lithuanian, "but not as much as I wanted to."

"You did pretty well," said Zagloba, assuming a patronizing air, "and that others surpassed you (here he twisted his moustaches) is not your fault."

The Lithuanian listened with downcast eyes and sighed, thinking of his ancestor Stoveyko and the three heads.

At that moment the curtain of the tent was raised and Pan Michael entered as lively and cheerful as a goldfinch on a bright morning.

"Well, we are all here," exclaimed Zagloba, "let him have some beer."

The little knight grasped the hands of his three comrades, and said: "You should see how many balls are lying about in the square; it surpasses imagination, you can't step without stumbling."

"I have seen them too," said Zagloba, "for after rising I took a short stroll about the camp. All the hens of the entire district of Lemberg could not lay so many eggs in two years. Ah! if they were only eggs. wouldn't we have a high time eating omelets. You must know, gentlemen, that I would not exchange omelets for the greatest delicacy. I have a soldier's disposition, so have you. I enjoy something good, but there must be plenty of it; for this reason I am more valiant in battle than the lazy youths of to-day who cannot retain a mouthful in their stomachs."

"Well, you showed us yesterday, with Burlay, what you are capable of," said the little knight. "To cut Burlay down in the way you did it, ho, ho; I did not expect it of you. Why, he was one of the bravest and most famous knights throughout the Ukraine and Turkey.'

"What! Ha!" said Zagloba proudly, "that was not my first deed nor my greatest, Pan Michael. I see we are all searching in a bushel of poppy-seed, but four of us have found each other at the bottom. Such another four you could not find in the whole Commonwealth. By God! with you gentlemen, and our prince at the head, we could make our way on foot to Stambul. Now let me tell you: Pan Skshetuski killed Burdabut, and yesterday Tukhay Bey."

"Tukhay Bey is not dead," interrupted Skshetuski, "I felt how the blade rebounded, then at once we were separated."

"All the same," said Zagloba, "don't interrupt me, Pan Yan. Pan Michael cut down Bohun at Warsaw, as we have said."

"Better not mention that," said the Lithuanian.

"What is said is said," replied Zagloba, "though I should prefer myself to forget it. But let me proceed. Well, Pan Podbipyenta from Myshykishki did up Pulyan, and I, Burlay. I cannot conceal from you, gentlemen, however, that I would give all those fellows for one Burlay, and that I had the greatest work in settling him. That man was a devil, not a Cossack. If I had legitimate sons I would leave them an illustrious name. I would like to know what his Majesty the King and the Diet will say, and how they will reward us, who live more on sulphur and brimstone than on anything else."

"There was a hero who was greater than any of us," said Pan Longin, "but his name nobody knows or remembers."

"I should like to know who he may be,' said Zagloba, offended, "he must have lived in ancient times."

"No, not in ancient times," said the Lithuanian, "it was that little brother who at Tshetstyana upset King Gustavus Adolphus and his horse and captured him."

"I heard that this was at Putsek," interrupted Pan Michael.

"The king, however, tore himself away and fled," said Skshetuski.

"So it was. I can tell you something about it,' said Zagloba, blinking his eye, "for I was then serving under the noble Konyetspolski, father of the royal standard bearer, I know something about it. Modesty prevents me from making known the name of the hero, therefore nobody knows it. Believe me, Gustavus Adolphus was a great warrior, as great as Konyetspolski, but my encounter with Burlay was a much more difficult task, let me tell you."

"Then as I understand it, it was you who overthrew Gustavus Adolphus," said Volodiyovski.

"Why, have I boasted about it, Pan Michael? Let it remain forgotten. To-day I can boast of a deed which will long be remembered. This beer rumbles terribly in the stomach, and the more cheese there is in it the more it rumbles; for my part I prefer wine, though I thank God for

what we have. It may be that we shall lack even this. The priest Jabkovski tells me that provisions are scarce, and that worries him a good deal for he has a stomach as big as a barn. He is a huge Bernardine; I have become very fond of him; the blood of a soldier rather than a priest flows in his veins. The man whom he strikes in the snout must order his coffin at once."

"I have not told you, gentlemen, yet," remarked the little knight, "how well chaplain Yaskolski behaved last night. He posted himself in the corner of the tower on the right side of the castle and watched the fight. You must know that he is an excellent shot. He remarked to Jabkovski: 'I won't shoot at the Cossacks, for they at any rate are Christians, although they displease God; but Tartars,' said he, 'I abhor.' Then he began to shoot, and I understand that he knocked over a score and a half of them during the battle."

"I would that all the clergy were like him," sighed Zagloba, "but our Mukhovietski merely folds his hands and weeps that so much Christian blood is being shed."

"Never mind," said Skshetuski, earnestly, "Mukhovietski is a holy friar; and the best proof of this is, that although he is younger than the two others, they nevertheless humble themselves before him."

"Not only do I not deny his holiness," said Zagloba, "I even believe that he could convert the Khan himself. Oh! gentlemen, his Majesty the Khan must be in such a rage that the lice upon him are turning summersaults from fright. If he goes to negotiations, I shall also go with the commissioners. We are old friends; once upon a time he used to be very fond of me. Maybe he still remembers me."

"No doubt that Yanitski will be selected to conduct the negotiations, because he speaks the Tartar language as well as the Polish," said Skshetuski.

"And so do I. The murzas and myself know each other as white-streaked horses. When I was in the Crimea they wanted to give their daughters to me in order to have a beautiful progeny, and as I was young and had made no vow of chastity, like his grace, Pan Podbipyenta of Myshykishki I had some rousing times."

"That is offensive to the ear," said Longin bashfully.

"And you always repeat the same thing like a starling, it is apparent that the Beet-soup-eaters are not conversant with human speech."

The conversation was interrupted by a murmur of voices outside the tent. The knights went out to see what was the matter. A number of soldiers stood on the entrenchments looking at the region about, which had materially changed during the night and was still changing. The Cossacks indeed had not been idle since the last assault. They had made breastworks and placed cannon behind them, longer and more far reaching than any to be found in the Polish camp, and had begun to throw up winding and crosswise entrenchments and approaches. From a distance these heaps of earth looked like thousands of gigantic molehills, the entire slope of the plain was covered with them, the freshly turned up earth showed everywhere in dark spots amid the green of the grass, and everywhere men were toiling at the earthworks. On the front ramparts glittered the red caps of the Cossacks.

The prince, accompanied by the Starosta of Krasnostavsk and Pan Pshiyemski stood upon the intrenchments. A little lower down the Castellan of Belsk surveyed through a field-glass the Cossack works, and said to the royal cup-bearer:

"The enemy is beginning a regular siege, I see that we shall have to abandon the defense within the intrenchments and take refuge in the castle."

Prince Yeremy overheard these words and bending towards the castellan said: "God forbid! for we should be going voluntarily into a trap. Here we must live or die."

"That's my opinion too, even though I should have to kill a Burlay every day," interposed Zagloba, "I protest in the name of the entire army against the opinion of the Castellan of Belsk."

"This is not your business," said the prince.

"Keep quiet," whispered Volodiyovski, pulling the nobleman's coat sleeve.

"We will dig them out of their hiding-places like moles," said Zagloba, "and I beg your Highness to let me take the first sally; they know me now well enough, but they shall know more."

"A sally," said the prince, contracting his forehead, "better wait . . . until the nights are dark." . . .

Then turning to the Starosta of Krasnostavsk, to Pan Pshiyenski, and the commanders, he said:

"I request you, gentlemen, to come to a conference." And descending from the ramparts he was followed by all the superior officers.

"For Heaven's sake! what are you doing?" said Volodiyovski to Zagloba. "What do you mean? Don't you know that it is against military discipline to interrupt the conversation of your superior officers? The prince is a mild man, but in war time he will stand no joking."

"That is nothing, Pan Michael," said Zagloba, "the old Pan Konyetspolski was as fierce as a lion, yet he highly valued my advice, and may the wolves eat me if it was not just for that reason that he twice defeated Gustavus Adolphus. I know how to talk with these gentlemen, didn't you notice how the prince gave way when I advised a sally? If God grants us a victory, who will get the credit then—what—you?"

At that moment Zatsvilikhovski approached.

"Look!" said he, "they are rooting, rooting, like swine," pointing to the field.

"I would they were swine," answered Zagloba, "we would have cheap sausages then. But their carcasses are not fit even for dogs. In Pan Firley's quarters the soldiers have had to dig a well, you can't see any water in the eastern pond now on account of the numbers of bodies. At about dawn the gall-bladders of the curs burst and they rose to the surface. We shall not be able to eat fish any more on Friday, because they have fed upon flesh."

"True," said Zatsvilikhovski, "but I have never seen so many corpses except perhaps at Khotsim, when the janissaries stormed our camp."

"You will see more of them yet, I tell you."

"I think that they will begin to attack us this evening, or before the evening."

"But I say that they will let us alone until to-morrow."

Zagloba had scarcely finished when white smoke puffed up from the enemy's earthworks, and balls began to fly over the intrenchments.

"There you are!" exclaimed Zatsvilikhovski.

"Bah! they know nothing of the art of war," said Zagloba.

Old Zatsvilikhovski was right. Khmyelnitski had begun a regular siege; he had closed all ways and exits, removed the pasture, had thrown up entrenchments and approaches, had dug winding ditches about the camp, but he did not neglect to make assaults, he annoyed and frightened them. He had decided to give the besieged no rest, to tire them out, and to harass them until the weapons should drop from their weary hands. Therefore in the evening he again attacked Vish-

nyovyetski's quarters, but with no better result than on the previous day, especially as his soldiers did not display the same zeal. On the following day the firing did not stop for a moment. The winding ditches were so near to the camp that musketry-fire reached the ramparts; the earthworks smoked like miniature volcanoes from morning till night. It was not a general battle but an incessant bombardment. The besieged made occasional sorties, when swords, flails, lances and scythes met in the conflict, but whenever some of the Cossacks were swept away, others immediately took their places. The besieged soldiers had no rest all day long, and when the wished-for sunset came, a general assault was begun, a sally was out of the question.

On the night of July 16th, two brave colonels, Hladk and Nebada, attacked the prince's quarters and were terribly defeated. Three thousand of the most active Cossacks were left upon the field, the rest, pursued by the Starosta of Krasnostavsk, fled to their wagon-train, throwing away their arms and powder-horns. The same ill fate befell Fedeorenko, who, under cover of a dense fog, in the early morning, almost succeeded in capturing the town. Pan Korf, at the head of the Germans, repulsed him, and the Chief of Krasnostavsk and the standard bearer of Konyetspolski almost annihilated the attacking party as they fled.

But this was nothing in comparison to the frightful assault which, on July 19th, was made upon the intrenchments. The night previous the Cossacks had heaped up high embankments right opposite the quarters of Vishnyovyetski and from these heavy cannons belched out an incessant fire. At the close of day, when the first stars were twinkling in the sky, thousands upon thousands pushed forward to the assault. A number of awful-looking machines, resembling towers, appeared in the distance and slowly approached the ramparts. At the sides of these were things that looked like outstretched wings, these were bridges to be thrown over the intrenchments. The tops of the towers were enveloped in smoke from the discharges from small cannon and muskets. They rolled on amid the swarm of heads like gigantic commanders, now blazing with the fire of guns, now disappearing in smoke and darkness. The soldiers pointed them out to each other from the distance, whispering:

"Those are Tartar moving towers. Khmyelnitski wants to grind us in those wind mills. See how they roll with a noise like thunder."

"Fire at them with cannon!" shouted others.

The prince's artillerymen fired ball after ball, grenade after grenade, at the terrible towers. But as they could only be seen when the flashes lighted the darkness, the balls for the most part missed their mark.

Nearer and nearer drew the dense throng of Cossacks, like a dark wave rolling along at night on the expanse of the sea.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Zagloba, who was with Skshetuski's cavalry, "I feel hotter than ever before in my life. The night is so close that everything on me is wringing wet. The devil invented these machines. May the earth swallow them up. These rascals stick like a bone in my throat, amen! There is neither time to eat nor sleep,—the very dogs live better than we! Ugh! how hot it is!"

The air was indeed oppressive and sultry, and besides it was pregnant with the exhalations of corpses which for days had been putrifying on the battle-field. The sky was shrouded with heavy black clouds. A storm was threatening Zbaraj. Perspiration trickled over the bodies of the soldiers and their breathing was heavy.

At that moment drums began to rumble in the darkness.

"They will open attack at once," said Skshetuski, "do you hear the drums?"

"I hear, I wish the devil were drumming on them. It is sheer desperation."

"Kill! kill!" shouted the onward-rushing mass.

Along the entire length of the rampart the battle raged. Vishnyovyetski, Lantskoronski, Firley, and Ostrorvga were attacked simultaneously, so that one could not assist the other. The Cossacks, drunk with gorzalka, attacked more fiercely than ever, but were met also with braver resistance. The heroic spirit of their leader reanimated the soldiers. The fierce regular infantry composed of Mazovian peasants, fought the Cossacks with such fury that they got mixed up with their lines. They clubbed with their muskets and fought also with fists and teeth. Beneath the blows of the terrible Mazovians several hundred of the splendid Zaporojian infantry succombed, but fresh bodies immediately took their places. Along the whole line the battle grew more furious. The musket barrels burned the hands of the soldiers; they became short of breath; the commanders could scarcely speak through hoarseness. The Starosta of Krasnostavsk and Skshetuski rushed with the cavalry upon the enemies flank, and bathed

in the blood of entire divisions as they trampled them down.

Hour after hour passed, but the attack abated not, for the gaps in the ranks of Khmyelnitski's Cossacks were instantly filled with fresh men. The Tartars filled the air with shouts and sent clouds of arrows at the defending soldiers. Men from behind urged the "blacks" on with clubs and scourges. Rage fought with rage, breast struck breast, and man embraced man in the struggle of death.

Thus they dashed like breakers upon rocky islands.

Suddenly the earth trembled beneath the feet of the warriors, the whole sky was enveloped in bluish flames, as if God could no longer look upon the atrocious deeds of men. An awful crash drowned the shouting of the men and the thunder of cannon: The artillery of heaven began a still more terrible cannonade. From east and west the tempest raged. It seemed as though the vault of heaven burst, together with the clouds, and was about to fall on the heads of the combatants. At moments all the world seemed like one vast flame, and then all were blind in the darkness, and again, the red zigzag streaks of lightning rent the black veil. A whirlwind swept away thousands of caps, streamers, and flags, and scattered them over the battle field in the twinkling of an eye. A chaos of thunder clasps, tempest, lightning, fire, and darkness followed,—the heavens raged like the men.

Over the town and castle, the intrenchments and the camp burst the unprecedented tempest. The battle was discontinued. Finally the floodgates of heaven opened and not streams, but cataracts, poured down upon the earth. The storm enveloped the earth so that one could not see a step in advance; bodies floated in the ditch. The Cossack regiments abandoned the assault and fled precipitately to their camp. Hurrying along blindly, they ran into each other, and thinking that the enemy was in pursuit, they scattered in the darkness. Right behind them plowed artillery and ammunition wagons, sinking in the mire and overturning. The water washed away the Cossacks' earth-works, roared in the winding trenches, flowed over the covered places, though provided with ditches, and rushed roaring over the plain as if in pursuit of the fleeing Cossacks.

The downpour grew heavier and heavier. The infantry in the trenches left the ramparts and fled to their tents. But the cavalry of the Chief of Krasnostavsk and Skshetuski received no order to retreat. They stood close to each other

as if in a sea, shaking the water from themselves. Gradually the storm abated. At midnight the rain finally ceased. Between rifts in the clouds here and there a star shone. Another hour passed, and the water had fallen a little. Then suddenly the prince himself appeared before Skshetuski's squadron.

"Gentlemen," he inquired, "are your powder-pouches dry?"

"They are, Most Serene Prince," answered Skshetuski.

"Good! Dismount, wade through the water to those war machines, put powder under them, and blast them; but go quietly. The Chief of Krasnostavsk will go with you."

"Your order wil be executed, Sir," answered Skshetuski.

Then the prince caught sight of Zagloba, who was drenched to the skin.

"You asked to go on a sally, now go with these," he said.

"The deuce take it," murmured Zagloba, "this completes my misery."

A half hour later two divisions of knights, two hundred and fifty men in each, hurried along wading through water that reached to their armpits. They held their swords in their hands. They were making for those terrible towers of the Cossacks, which stood about half a furlong from the intrenchments.

One division was led by that lion of lions, the Chief of Krasnostavsk, Marek, Sobieski, who would not hear of staying within the trenches; the other by Skshetuski. Attendants carried after them pails of tar, dry wood for torches, and powder. Thep proceeded without noise, like wolves creeping towards a sheepfold on a dark night.

The little knight joined Skshetuski as a volunteer, for Pan Michael loved such undertakings more than life. He trod along in the water with joy in his heart and his sword in his hand. Beside him went Pan Bodbipyenta with his unsheathed "Cowl cutter" sword towering above all, for he was two heads taller than the tallest of the others. Among them Zagloba hastened to keep pace, panting, grumbling, and mimicking the words of the prince, "You asked to go on a sally, go now with these. A dog wouldn't go to its wedding through water like this. If ever I advise a sally in such weather may I drink nothing but water all my life! Why, I am not a duck and my belly is not a boat. I have always abominated water, and all the more do I despise this water in which peasant carcasses are soaking."

"O keep quiet," said Pan Michael.

"Keep quiet yourself, you are no bigger than a gudgeon and know how to swim, so it is easy for you. I must say that it is ungrateful on the part of the prince to begrudge my enjoying a rest after my victory over Burlay. Zagloba has done enough, may everybody do as much, but let Zagloba alone, for you will be badly off when he is no more. For God's sake, if I fall into a hole, pull me out by the ears, for I should drown at once."

"Keep quiet," said Skshetuski, "behind those dark shadows Cossacks are lurking, they might hear you."

"Where? what did you say?"

"Why there, in those mounds in the grass."

"As though that too was wanting. May the bright thunder strike them. . . . "

But the remaining words were choked off by Pan Michael, who put his hand on Zagloba's mouth, for the earthworks were scarce fifty steps away. The men kept as quiet as possible, but the water splashed beneath their feet: fortunately it began to rain again and the noise drowned that of their footsteps.

There were no sentries stationed at the coverings. Who in the world could have expected a sally in such a tempest, which divided the contending armies as with a lake.

Pan Michael and Longin pushed ahead and reached the earthworks first. The little knight let his sabre drop by his side, and putting both hands to his mouth cried out "Hello! there."

"Hey! Men!"

"What is it?" answered from within the voices of the Cossacks who evidently thought that some one had come over from the Cossack wagon camp.

"God be praised," said Volodiyovski, "let us in."

"Don't you know how to get in?"

"Yes, I know," answered Volodiyovski, and having found the entrance he jumped in. Longin and others followed him.

Then from the interior of the mound arose terrified cries. At the same time the knights shouted and rushed together into other mounds. Groans and the clash of steel mingled in the darkness. Here and there dark figures rushed past, others fell to the ground, now and then shots were heard; all that scrimmage did not last long, not even a quarter of an hour. The Cossacks for the most part, in deep sleep, were surprised

and even offered no resistance, and were killed before they could reach their arms.

"To the infernal machines!" cried the voice of the Starosta of Krasnostavsk.

The knights rushed to the towers.

"Fire them from the inside, for the outside is wet," thundered Skshetuski.

But the order was not easy to carry out; for in these towers built of pine beams, no door or any sort of inlet could be found. The Cossack gunners mounted them on ladders, and the guns, of small calibre, as only for such was there room, were drawn up with ropes. The knights for some time ran round the towers, striking the walls with their swords and pulilng with their hands at the corners.

Fortunately the attendants had brought axes, and they began to hack at the towers. Pan Marek Sobieski ordered casks of powder that had been prepared for the purpose to be laid beneath. The casks of tar and torches were lighted, and the flames began to lick the wet wood.

Before it ignited and the powder had exploded, Longin bent down and lifted up an enormous stone which the Cossacks had dug from the ground.

Four of the strongest men could not move it from its place, but he raised it with his mighty hands, and in the light of the burning tar the blood could be seen rushing to his face. The knights gazed upon him with amazement.

"It is Hercules himself! May bullets strike him!" they exclaimed, raising their hands with astonishment.

Meanwhile Longin went up to one of the machines under which no fire had been set yet, bent backward, and hurled the stone at the centre of the wall. Those present bent their heads, the stone whizzed in its course and burst open the mortices; a crash was heard, the tower opened as if broken in two, then tumbled down with a crash.

Tar was poured over the masses of timber and it was set on fire at once.

Shortly afterwards several tens of the towers were ablaze, like gigantic torches they illumined the plain. Rain was still falling, but the fire prevailed and the towers were ablaze to the astonishment of both armies, since the night was so wet.

From the Cossack camp Stepka, Kulak and Mrozovitski, each at the head of some thousands of Cossacks, rushed to the rescue. They attempted to extinguish the flames, but in vain.

The pillars of flame and the red clouds of smoke rose higher and higher towards the sky and were reflected in the lakes and ponds that had been formed by the tempest on the battle field.

Meanwhile the knights hurried in close lines towards the entrenchments, and were greeted from afar with shouts of joy. Suddenly Skshetuski looked about, glanced through the lines, and thundered out, "Halt."

Longin and the little knight were missing. Probably in their zeal they had remained too long in the last tower, or perhaps they had found Cossacks in hiding. Anyway they had not noticed the returning knights.

"Return," commanded Skshetuski.

The Starosta of Krasnostavsk did not know what was the matter. He hurried up to inquire, and just at that moment the two lost men appeared, as if they had emerged from the earth half way between the towers and the knights.

Longin with his shining "Cowl cutter" in his hand, took giant strides, and beside him Pan Michael trotted along. Both of them had their heads turned towards the Cossacks, who were pursuing them like a pack of unleashed hounds. By the red gleam of the fires the pursuit was clearly visible. It looked as if an enormous elk with its young one was fleeing before a crowd of hunters, ready at any moment to stand at bay against the pursuers.

"They will be slaughtered; for heaven's sake, onward!" shouted Zagloba in a heartrending voice. "They will slay them with arrows or musket shots. For Christ's sake, be quick!"

Without considering that a new battle might begin the next moment, he rushed sword in hand, together with Skshetuski and others, to the rescue. He slipped, stumbled, got up again, snorted, shouted, and shaking all over, rushed onward with the last remnant of his legs and breath.

But the Cossacks did not shoot, their guns were wet as were also the strings of their bows. They pressed on, however, and some running ahead had almost overtaken the fugitives, when the knights suddenly turned like bears at bay, and giving a great shout they raised their swords on high. Longin with his enormous sword appeared to them like a supernatural being.

As two tawny wolves turn about when the hounds press too closely upon them and show their white teeth, thus keeping the panting pack at a distance, so these two repeatedly

turned, and each time the pursuers halted. Once a man, bolder than the rest, ran up to them with a scythe in his hand, but Pan Michael jumped at him like a wild-cat and wounded him to death. The rest paused to wait for their comrades, who came bounding on in a dense mass.

But the lines of knights also came nearer and nearer, and Zagloba rushed along swinging his sword above his head and roaring out with an unearthly voice:

"Strike! kill!"

Now the ramparts thundered, and a bomb, screaming like an owl, described a red arc in the sky and fell amid the dense Cossack crowd. Soon there followed another, a third, and a tenth. It seemed as if the battle was to begin anew.

Before the siege of Zbaraj, this kind of missile was unknown to the Cossacks, and when sober, they stood in great terror of them, seeing in them evidences of Yeremy's sorcery. The pursuers therefore stopped for a moment, and scattered in every direction when the bombs burst among them, causing terror, death, and destruction.

"Save yourselves!" they yelled, in panic-stricken voices.

All scattered, and Pan Longin and the little knight hurried up to the ranks of the hussars. Zagloba embraced now one, now the other, kissing them on the cheeks and brows. Joy overpowered him. But he attempted to restrain it lest he should show his soft heart, therefore he cried:

"Hey! you blockheads! I won't say that I love you, but I feared for you. Suppose they had killed you! Is that the way you understand military discipline, to lag behind? You deserve to have your feet tied to the tails of horses and to be dragged through the square. I shall be the first to tell the prince to punish you. Let us go to sleep now. Praise be to God for that! Those dog-brothers were in luck that the grenades dispersed them, for I should have cut them up like cabbages. How could I see my friends in danger and not fly to their aid? We must have a drink on this to-night. Praise be to God for that! I almost thought that we should have to sing a requiem to-morrow. Still I am sorry that no encounter took place, for my hand is itching terribly, though I made those fellows in the shelters taste horse-beans and onions."

CHAPTER IV.

It became necessary to build new ramparts and to concentrate the camp in order to render the entrenchments of the Cossacks useless, and to make defence easier for their own reduced forces. They worked therefore all through the night after the storm. But meantime the Cossacks did not remain idle. On the night between Tuesday and Wednesday they approached silently and threw up a second and much higher wall around the camp, from which at early dawn they opened fire amid loud shouts. For four days and four nights they continued an uninterrupted fire. Great destruction was wrought on both sides, for the best gunners of both armies were pitted against each other.

From time to time crowds of Cossacks and of detached hordes rushed to the assault, but they did not reach the ramparts, for the fire was too hot. The enemy possessing strong forces changed the divisions in action, allowing some to rest and sending others to the fight. In the opposite camp, however, there were no reserve troops. The same men had to keep firing, rush to the defense at any moment whenever assaults threatened, bury the dead, dig wells, and raise the ramparts higher for better protection. They slept, or rather dozed, on the ramparts under fire, while balls were flying so thickly that every morning they could be swept from the square. For four days no one removed his clothing, which when wet from rain was dried by the sun; during the day the bodies of the men were scorched, at night they were chilled. For four long days no one had a warm mouthful of food; they drank gorzalka, mixing powder with it to give it more substance; they munched biscuits and tore with their teeth dried-up bits of smoked meat; and all this in the midst of continued firing, smoke, of the whizzing of bullets, and the thunder of cannon.

To be struck on the head or about the body was nothing; the soldier tied a dirty rag about his bloody head and fought on. They were wonderful men. In ragged coats, with rusty

weapons, shattered muskets in their hands, and eyes red with sleeplessness, they were ever watchful, and ever ready, and eager day and night, in rain or in sunshine, to do battle.

The soldiers loved their leader in danger, in storms, in wounds, and in death. Their souls were the exalted souls of heroes, their hearts became hard as steel, their senses were dulled. Horror became a delight to them. Different squadrons vied with each other in enduring hunger, sleeplessness, toil, and in bravery and fury. It came to such a point that it was difficult to keep the soldiers on the ramparts; mere defense was not enough, they delighted in rushing upon the enemy like ravenous wolves upon a flock of sheep. In all the regiments a wild joy reigned. Had any one hinted at surrender he would have been torn to pieces on the spot. "Here we shall die," repeated every mouth.

Every command of the leader was executed with lightning-like rapidity. Once it happened that the prince, as he went at evening around the ramparts, noticing that the fire of the quarter regiment of Leschynski was growing weaker, rode up to the soldiers and asked:

"Why are you not firing?"

"We are out of powder, we have sent to the castle for some."

"There is some much nearer," said the prince, pointing to the enemy's entrenchment.

Hardly had he spoken when the entire regiment rushed from the ramparts, threw itself upon the enemy, and broke like a cyclone upon the entrenchments. With muskets clubbed, with swords and pikes, they slaughtered the Cossacks; four cannon were spiked; after half an hour they returned decimated, but victorious, and laden with stores of powder. Day followed day. The Cossack entrenchments formed an ever-closer ring around the Polish barricade and pushed into it as a wedge into wood. The firing was now at such close range that, not counting the assaults, about ten men a day fell in each squadron. The priests could not come to them with the sacrament. The besieged sheltered themselves with wagons, tents, skins, and suspended garments. The dead were buried at night on the spot on which they fell; but the living fought all the more fiercely over the graves of their comrades. Khmyelnitski let the blood of his men flow without stint, but every assault brought upon him greater losses. He was astounded at the resistance; he

counted upon time to shatter the courage and strength of the besieged, but time passed and they only showed an increasing contempt for death.

The leaders set an example to the soldiers. Prince Yeremy slept on the bare ground on the ramparts, drank gorzalka, ate smoked horse-meat, and endured the greatest hardships. The royal standard bearer Konyetspolski, and the Starosta of Krasnostavsk led divisions to the attack in person. During the assaults they exposed themselves without armor in the densest rain of bullets. Even leaders like Ostrorog who possessed no military knowledge and upon whom the soldiers looked with suspicion, seemed now to be changed into new men by Yeremy. Old Firley and Lantskronski slept also on the ramparts, and Pan Pshiyemski pointed cannon during the day time, and at night dug under ground like a mole, putting countermines beneath the mines of the Cossacks and blowing them into the air; or he built underground tunnels through which the soldiers stole like ghosts and surprised the Cossacks in their sleep.

Khmyelnitski finally decided to enter into negotiations, with the idea of accomplishing something by strategy. On the 24th of July, towards the evening, the Cossacks began to cry out to the Polish soldiers to cease firing. A Zaporojian envoy announced that the hetman wished to see old Zatsvilikhovski. After a short consultation the commanders accepted the proposition and the old man left the entrenchments.

The knights saw from the distance the respect with which Zatsvilikhovski was treated by the Cossacks; for during the short time he was a commissioner, he had gained the regard of the wild Zaporojians, and Khmyelnitski himself held him in high respect. The firing ceased. The Cossacks came from their entrenchments close to the ramparts, and the knights went down to meet them. Both sides were on their guard, but there was nothing unfriendly in this meeting. The nobles had always liked the Cossacks more than the "blacks," because of their valor and endurance in battle. Now they met them on equal terms, as knights with knights. The Cossacks looked with wonder upon that impregnable den of lions which held in check their might and that of the Khan. They mingled more freely and began to deplore that so much Christian blood was being shed. Finally, they treated one another to tobacco and gorzalka.

"Hah! noble knights!" said some of the veteran Zaporojians, "if you had always fought in this way there would have been a different outcome at Zolta Woda, Korsun and Pilavyets. Why you are devils, and not men; we never have seen the like of you."

"Come to-morrow and the day afterwards; you will always find us the same."

"Yes, we shall come, but thank God now for a brief rest. Much Christian blood is being shed, but hunger will conquer you in the end."

"The king will come before hunger; we have just risen from a hearty meal."

"And should provisions became scarce we will look for them in your wagon-trains," said Zagloba, with his arms akimbo.

"God grant that our brother, Zatsvilikhovski, is successful in making terms with our hetman. If not, we shall attack again this evening."

"We are waiting for you."

"The Khan has promised that you shall all die."

"And our prince has resolved to honor the Khan by dragging him by the beard at his horse's tail."

"He is a wizard, but he cannot accomplish that."

"It were better for you to fight with our prince against the heathens, than to rise in arms against your sovereign."

"With your prince? H'm! that would be nice."

"Why do you rebel? the king is coming; fear the king. Prince Yeremy was also a father to you—"

"He is a father as death is a mother. The plague has not swept away so many warriors as he."

"He will do worse; you don't know him yet."

"Nor do we wish to know him. Our chiefs say that the Cossack whom he looks upon is lost."

"It will be so with Khmyelnitski."

"God knows what will happen. This is certain, that both cannot live together on this earth. Our father says that if you will surrender Yeremy to him, he will let you all go free, and that he with all of us will do homage to the king."

At this the soldiers began to gasp and grind their teeth.

"Keep quiet, or we will draw our swords."

"You Poles are faithful," said the Cossacks, "but you shall die."

And thus they conversed, sometimes in a friendly manner,

sometimes angrily threatening each other. In the afternoon Zatsvilikhovski returned to the camp. Negotiations had not been agreed upon, and a truce had not been obtained. Khmyelnitski demanded the surrender of the prince and of the royal standard bearer Konyetspolski. Finally, he enumerated the wrongs that had been inflicted upon the Zaporojians, and sought to persuade Zatsvilikhovski to remain with him; this had angered the old knight and he sprang up and rode away. In the evening an assault took place which was repulsed with great slaughter. The whole camp was afire for two hours. Not only were the Cossacks repulsed from the ramparts, but the infantry captured the first entrenchment, destroyed the embrazures, and burned fourteen moving towers. Khmyelnitski had vowed to the Khan that on this night he would not withdraw as long as a man remained alive within the entrenchments.

At early dawn the firing and the undermining of the ramparts was begun afresh. The whole day long the battle raged, and flails, scythes, swords, stones, and clods of earth, were used in the combat. The friendly feeling of the day before, that regretted shedding Christian blood, had given place to a wild exasperation. Rain fell off and on in the morning. The soldiers received only half rations on this day, at which Pan Zagloba grumbled greatly but empty stomachs doubled the rage of the knights. They swore that they would not surrender, but would fight to the last breath. In the evening the Cossacks, disguised as Turks, made a fresh assault, but this lasted but a short time. A noisy and restless night followed. The firing did not cease for a moment. The combatants challenged each other and they fought singly and in groups.

Pan Longin rushed out on a sally, but no one dared to oppose him, they only shot at him from a distance. But Skshetuski and Volodiyovski gained great glory, and the latter in single combat killed the famous warrior Dudar.

Even Zagloba sallied out, but only to indulge his tongue: "Since I defeated Burlay," said he, "I cannot fight any common rascal." In a battle of words he found not his equal among the Cossacks; when in safety behind an embankment he drove them desperate by shouting out, in a stentorian voice, which seemed to issue from the depths of the earth:

"You sit here, you peasants, before Zbaraj, but the Lithuanian army is marching up from the lowlands of the Dnieper.

They are enjoying themselves with your wives and daughters. Next spring you beet-soup-swillers will find in your homes, provided you find any homes, whole crowds of little beet-soup-swillers."

This was true. The Lithuanina army under Radzivil was really traversing the lowlands of the Dnieper, burning and destroying everything, and leaving only land and water behind them. The Cossacks knowing this, became enraged, and rained bullets on Zagloba, which fell about like pears from a tree that has been shaken. He dusked his head, however, behind the embankment, and called out again:

"You dog-souls have missed me, but I did not miss Burlay. Come on, I will fight you in single combat. You know me, come on. Pepper away, you peasants, as long as you can; next winter you will be nursing young Tartars in the Crimea laboring along the Dnieper. Come on! I'll give you a mite for the head of your Khmyelnitski. Give him a slap on the snout from me, from Zagloba, do you hear? You dirt! Is there not enough of your carrion lying about on the field smelling like dead dogs? The plague sends her regards to you; to your plows and scows and pitchforks, you dirty scoundrels; you should be rowing loads of salt and cherries against the stream, instead of disgusting us with your presence here."

The Cossacks laughed in their turn at the gentleman who shared a single biscuit among three. They asked why the gentlemen did not make their vassals pay their rents and tithes. But Zagloba always got the best of this kind of badinage. These interchanges of compliments, interrupted by curses and wild laughter, lasted through whole nights while firing and great and small combats raged. Then Pan Yanitski rode off to negotiate with the Khan, but the latter only repeated that they must die; whereupon the envoy, growing impatient, said:

"You prophesied this long ago but nothing has happened to us yet, he who comes for our heads brings his own."

The Khan asked that Prince Yeremy should confer with his Grand Vizir on the field, but this was discovered to be a treacherous trap, and the negotiations were broken off. The fighting went on unceasingly, in the evening assaults, during the day, cannonading and musketry-fire, flying shells and grenades, attacks, skirmishes, desperate sallies by the cavalry, defeats, and ever-increasing bloodshed.

A wild desire for danger and bloodshed possessed the soldiers. They went into battle with songs and laughter as if to a wedding. They had become so accustomed to the thunder of cannon, that the divisions that were detailed to sleep, slept peacefully under fire amid showers of bullets. Provisions grew scarcer; the commanders had not stocked the camp sufficiently before the arrival of the prince. The price of food rose very high, but those who had money for bread and gorzalka gladly shared their purchases with the others. No one took thought of the morrow, for everyone knew that one of two things was inevitable; either relief by the king or death. They were prepared for either, but more ready for battle. Ten resisted thousands with a valor unequalled in history, and with a fury that rendered every assault a defeat for the Cossacks. Besides, not a day passed without several sallies being made and attacks upon the enemy's own entrenchments. On the evenings when Khmyelnitski thought that fatigue had overcome the besieged, and he was preparing for an assault, joyful songs would reach his ears. He was lost in amazement and admiration, and the thought came to him that Yeremy was a mightier wizard than all the Cossacks put together. Then he would become furious with rage and throw himself into the battle. He shed oceans of blood, for he comprehended that his star was beginning to pale before that of the terrible prince.

In the camp of the Cossacks they sang songs about Yeremy and told stories about him at which the hair of the warriors stood on end. They said that at times when he appeared by night on the ramparts, he would visibly grow until he was taller by a head than the towers of Zbaraj, that his eyes then looked like two moons and that the sword in his hand shone like that star of ill omen that God sets at times in the sky for the destruction of men. They also related that at his call dead heroes arose with clank of armor, to join his living warriors. Yeremy was in the mouth of all; beggar minstrels sang of him; the old Zaporojians "blacks" and Tartars spoke of him. And in these stories and in the superstitious terror, there was evidenced a certain wild love, which these children of the steppes bore for their bloody destroyer. So it was; Khmyelnitski paled before him, not only in the eyes of the Khan and the Tartars, but even in the eyes of his own men. He saw that he must take Zbaraj, or his authority would vanish like mist before the dawn, he must trample this lion under foot or die.

But the lion not only defended himself but every day rushed with greater rage and fury from his lair. Neither superior force, nor treachery, nor stratagem, prevailed against him. The Cossacks and the "blacks" began to murmur. It was difficult for the latter to stand the smoke, fire, shower of bullets, smell of corpses, rain, and heat, in the face of death; but the brave Cossacks did not fear battle, labor, storms, fire, blood, death—they feared "Yeremy."

CHAPTER V.

In this memorable siege of Zbaraj many an obscure knight made himself a name of undying fame, but the greatest praise was due to Pan Longin Podbipyenta, whose great merits were only surpassed by his modesty.

The night was dreary, and dark, and wet; the soldiers weary from watching at the ramparts, dozed, leaning upon their weapons. After ten days of continuous battle, this was the first moment of peace and rest. In the new trench of the enemy scarce thirty paces distant, one could hear no shouts nor curses, nor the usual tumult. It appeared as if the enemy, who had desired to tire out the besieged, were themselves tired out. Here and there gleamed the faint light of a fire behind a mound. From somewhere there arose sweet, soft notes of a lute, played by some Cossack. In the distance the Tartar horses neighed, and on the embankments from time to time one could hear the calls of the sentinels.

The prince's cuirrassiers were that night on infantry-service in the camp. Skshetuski, Podbipyenta, the little knight, and Zagloba, conversed in low tones upon the rampart, and in the intervals of their discourse they listened to the splashing of the rain in the trench. Skshetuski remarked:

"This quiet seems strange to me, my ears are so accustomed to noise and uproar that they ring in the stillness. But I hope no treachery lies hidden in this silence."

"Since I receive but half rations it is all the same to me," Zagloba murmured sadly. "My courage requires three things: Sufficient to eat, plenty to drink, and plenty of sleep. The best strap drys and cracks if it is not oiled, and especially if it be soaked in water like hemp. The rain soaks us, the Cossacks hack us up, is it any wonder if we fall to pieces in strips? It is a pretty mess all round; the price of a loaf has risen to a florin and a quart of gorzalka to five. The water is not fit for a dog, for the wells are infected by the corpses, and I am as thirsty as my boots, which open their mouths like a fish."

"But your boots drink water without making any fuss over it," said Volodiyovski.

"Keep quiet, Pan Michael, why you are no larger than a titmouse, a grain of millet is sufficient for you, and you can't drink more than a thimbleful. But I, thank God, am not so delicate, and was not scratched up by a hen, but was born of a woman; therefore I need food and drink adequate for a man, and not for a bug. As I have had nothing in my mouth but saliva since noon-time, I can't relish your jokes."

Zagloba snorted with anger, and Pan Michael, feeling with his hand, said:

"I have in one of my pockets a flask that I snatched from a Cossack to-day; but since I was scratched up by a hen, I think the gorzalka of such an insignificant creature would not be to your relish either. Here's to you, Yan," said he, addressing Skshetuski.

"Give it to me, for I feel cold," said Skshetuski.

"Drink to the health of Pan Longin."

"You are a rascal, Pan Michael," said Zagloba. "Blessed be the hens that could scratch up warrors like you; unfortunately such hens do not exist. I did not have you in mind when I made the remark."

"Take it from Pan Podbipyenta," said Pan Michael. "I do not wish to offend you."

"What are you doing, man? Leave some for me," cried Zagloba, in alarm, as he watched the Lithuanian drinking. "You throw your head too far back, I wish to God it would remain so; the trouble with you is that your inside is too big, you don't fill up soon enough. Just look at him pouring the gorzalka down, as if into a decayed tree-trunk. May you be killed!"

"What's the matter, I drank but a few drops," said Longin, passing the flask.

Zagloba put it too his lips and drained the contents, then he puffed and said:

"The only consolation is, that when our misery is over, and God allows us to carry our heads out of these dangers, we will make up for it all. I think some feasts will surely be prepared for us. The Bernardine Jabkovski is a fine feeder but I can drive him away even with a goat's horn."

"And what news did you and the priest Jabkovski hear to-day from Mukhovietski,' said Pan Michael.

"Hush!" said Skshetuski, "someone is coming from the square."

They all grew dumb and a dark figure appeared and asked in a low voice:

"Are you watching?"

"We are, Your Highness," said Skshetuski, rising.

"Be on your guard. This quiet threatens evil."

The prince then passed on to see if sleep had overcome the tired soldiers anywhere. Pan Longin clasped his hands:

"What a leader! What a warrior!"

"He rests less than we do," said Skshetuski, "he examines all the ramparts from here to the second lake in this manner every night."

"God give him health!"

"Amen!"

Silence followed. All looked with straining eyes into the darkness, but they could see nothing; silence reigned over the Cossack entrenchments, every fire was extinguished.

"We could devour them now like susliks," murmured Volodiyovski.

"Who can tell," replied Skshetuski.

"I am so sleepy," muttered Zagloba, "that I can scarcely keep my eyes open, and yet sleep is forbidden. I should like to know when it will be allowed. Whether there is firing going on or not, one must remain under arms and keep watch, nodding from weariness, like a Jew on his Sabbath. It is fit service for dogs! I don't know what excites me so, whether it is the gorzalka or the confusion that overtook the priest Jabkovski and myself this morning on account of an undeserved lecture that we got."

"How did that happen?" asked Pan Longin, "you began to tell us, but did not finish."

"Then I'll tell you now; it may help to keep us awake. Well, I went with Father Jabkovski to the castle, hoping to find something to munch there. We looked about everywhere, but could find nothing, and we came back in a bad humor. In the Court we met a Calvinist priest who had been giving the last consolation to Captain Shenberk of Firley's squadron, who was wounded yesterday. I asked him: 'Why are you prowling about here and angering God? You will bring a curse upon us yet!' Then he, evidently relying upon the protection of the Castellan of Belsk, replied: 'Our faith is as good as yours, and better, perhaps." When he said this we were petrified with horror. But I held my tongue. I thought to myself, Father Jabkovski is here, let him carry on

the argument. Jabkovski immediately came out with a great argument, for he punched him under his ribs. The Calvinist made no reply, but tottered till he fell against the wall. At this moment the Prince and Mukhovietski passed by, and then we caught it. We should not argue nor make an uproar, for this was neither the time nor place for it. They scolded us as if we were two schoolboys; and hardly with right, for unless I am a false prophet, these ministers of Pan Firley will bring misfortune upon us."

"And what about Captain Shenberk, was he converted?" asked Pan Michael.

"No, he died in error, as he had lived."

"Oh, that men should renounce their salvation rather than their stubbornness," sighed Pan Longin.

"God protects us in the face of the overwhelming forces of the Cossacks," Zagloba continued, "and yet men continue to insult him. Is it known to you, gentlemen, that balls of thread were shot into the square from yonder trench, and the soldiers say that where the balls fell the ground was covered with leprosy?"

"It is known that devils are employed by Khmyelnitski to do such things," said the Lithuanian, crossing himself.

"I saw the witches myself," added Skshetuski, "and I tell you, gentlemen——"

He was interrupted by Volodiyovski, who suddenly pressed his arm and whispered:

"Silence!"

Then he sprang to the edge of the ramparts and listened attentively.

"I don't hear anything," said Zagloba.

"Sh! the rain drowns everything," said Skshetuski.

Pan Michael waved with his hand for silence and continued to listen carefully for some time. At last he approached his comrades, "they are coming," he whispered. "Inform the prince, he has gone towards Ostrorog's quarters," said Skshetuski softly, "meantime we will warn the soldiers."

Instantly they hurried along the ramparts, stopping every moment and whispering to the sentinels:

"They are coming! they are coming!"

The words flew from mouth to mouth like lightning. About a quarter of an hour later the prince arrived on horseback and gave instructions to the officers. Since the enemy evidently purposed to surprise the camp while asleep, and the

prince wished him to remain in this illusion, the soldiers were to keep as quiet as possible and to let the assailants come right up to the ramparts, and then, when a cannon was fired as a signal, they were to attack them at once and take them by surprise.

The soldiers were ready; their muskets in their hands they waited in silence. Skshetuski, Volodiyovski and Longin stood next to each other. Zagloba remained near them also, for he knew from experience that most of the balls fell on the square, and that he was safest on the rampart near these three warriors. He posted himself a little behind the knights, so as to escape the first onset. Longin knelt a little to one side, and Volodiyovski pressed close to Skshetuski and whispered in his ear.

"They are coming, surely."

"With measured tread."

"These are no 'blacks,' nor Tartars."

"Zaporojian infantry?"

"Or janissaries, for they march well. We could attack them best with cavalry."

"It is too dark for cavalry to-night."

"Do you hear them now?"

"Sh!"

The camp seemed sunk in sleep; the deepest silence prevailed, broken only by the patter of the rain. Another sound, like a pattering, might be heard, ever increasing and growing more and more distinct; at last a long, dense mass, but a few steps from the trench, made itself visible, inasmuch as it was darker and blacker than the darkest of nights.

The soldiers held their breath, and the little knight jogged Skshetuski's elbow as if thus to express his satisfaction.

The assailants reached the fosse and lowering ladders into it, they descended, and then leaned them against the rampart on the opposite side. The rampart was wrapped in a silence as if all were dead upon and behind it.

In spite of all the caution of the assailants, a step creaked and shook on the ladder-rounds now and then.

"You'll get your dish of horse-beans all right," said Zagloba to himself.

Volodiyovski had ceased jogging Skshetuski, Pan Longin grasped firmly his "Cowl-cutter" and prepared to give the first blow, for he was nearest to the edge of the rampart. Three pair of hands showed on the edge of the rampart, then

three helmet crests gradually and cautiously mounted higher and higher.

"These are Turks," thought Pan Longin.

In an instant a terrible roar of thousands of muskets resounded; it became as light as day. Ere the light vanished Longin swung his arm and landed such a mighty stroke with his terrible sword, that the air whistled about it.

Three bodies fell into the trench; three helmeted heads rolled before the kneeling knight.

Though hell was raging upon earth, heaven opened before Pan Longin. Wings seemed to sprout from his shoulders; choirs of angels sang in his breast, as if he were rising up to heaven; he fought as in a dream and every blow of his sword was like a prayer of thanks.

All his ancestors from Stoveyko down were rejoicing in heaven at this last holder of the Podbipyenta Cowl-Cutter, was such a man.

This assault, in which on the enemies' side the auxiliary forces of the Rumelian and Silistrian Turks, together with the Khan's guards, took the main part, was repulsed with more bloodshed than any preceding attack, and drew down a terrible tempest of wrath upon the head of Khmyelnitski. He had assured the Khan that the Poles would fight with less rage against the Turks, and that if these troops were given to him, he would certainly capture the camp. He was, therefore, now obliged to mollify the Khan and the enraged murzas, and to win them with presents. He presented the Khan with ten thousand dollars and Tukhay Bey, Korz Adze, Subagazi, Nuv-ed-Din Galzi, with two thousand each.

In the meantime the camp-followers dragged the bodies from the trench. The soldiers rested until morning, for they were convinced that the assault would not be repeated. All slept soundly, except Longin Podbipyenta, who lay in the form of a cross all night upon his sword, and thanked God that he had permitted him to accomplish his vow and to have gained such glory that his name was repeated from mouth to mouth in camp and town. Next morning he was summoned to the presence of Prince Vishnyovyetski, who praised him highly, while the soldiers came in crowds all day to congratulate him and to look at the three heads which had been placed by a servant before his tent and which were already blackening the air. There was no little amazement and envy, and some could scarce believe their own eyes for the heads and

PAN LONGIN SLASHED TERRIBLY.

linked cowls were cut off from the helmets as evenly as if they had been done with shears.

"You are a terrible cutter," exclaimed the nobles. "We knew well enough that you were an excellent knight, but the heroes of the ancient times might well envy you such a stroke, for the best executioner could not land a better."

"The wind does not take off caps from heads as easily as these heads were taken off," said others. All shook hands with Longin. He stood with downcast eyes, gentle and bashful as a bride at her wedding, and modestly said as though explaining it: "They were conveniently situated."

The crowd then examined the sword, but since it had extraordinary width and length, none could handle it freely, not even Father Jabkovski, though he could break a horse shoe like a reed.

Around the tent the babel of voices increased. Volodiyovski and Zagloba and Skshetuski received the visitors and entertained them with stories, for the last biscuit in the camp had been consumed and for a long time they had eaten no other meat but horse-flesh. Wit, however, made up for food and drink. At length when the others had commenced to disperse, Marek, Sobieski, the Starosta of Krasnostavsk and his lieutenant Stempovski approached. Pan Longin hurried out to welcome him. Sobieski greeted him warmly, and said:

"So you are having a holiday to-day?"

"It is indeed a holiday," said Zagloba, "for our friend has accomplished his vow."

"Praise be to God!" answered the chief, "then it will not be long before we congratulate you, little brother, on your marriage. Have you any one in view?"

Longin blushed with shame and confusion, but the chief continued:

"I see by your embarrassment that it is so. It is your sacred duty to keep in mind that such a stock should not die out. God grant that on stones should be born such soldiers as are you four gentlemen."

Then he shook hands with Longin, Skshetuski, Zagloba, and the little knight. They were rejoiced to hear praise from such lips, for Pan Krasnostavsk was a model of bravery, honor, and all knightly virtues, he was a personified Mars. All the gifts of God had been showered upon him, and in beauty he surpassed even his younger brother, who later became king. In nobility of birth, and in fortune he was equal to the first

in the land, and his military acquirements were even praised by the great Yeremy himself. In him would have arisen a star of the first magnitude in the firmament of the Commonwealth, but that by God's decree, the younger brother Yan absorbed the glory, while he himself was dimmed before his time in a day of disaster. The knights therefore were greatly delighted at being praised by this hero. But he had not ended yet, and continued:

"Prince Vishnyovyetski has spoken much of you to me, for he loves you beyond all the others, and hence I do not wonder that you serve him without seeking promotion, which comes more readily in the service of the king."

Skshetuski replied to this:

"We are all enrolled in the hussar regiment of the king, with the exception of Zagloba, who from natural valor, serves as a volunteer. That we serve under the prince is due to our love for his person, and our desire to participate in as many battles as possible."

"If you love fighting, then you have done well. Pan Longin would have hardly found his three heads under any other command," said the chief. "But as far as war in concerned we all have had enough of it."

"More than of anything else," retorted Zagloba. "From early morning the soldiers have been coming hither with praises, but if any one had brought us a bit of bread and a drink of gorzalka, he would have pleased us best."

Then Zagloba looked meaningly into the eyes of the chief, and blinked at him. The chief smiled and said:

"Since yesterday noon nothing has passed my lips; but a swallow of gorzalka could, I think, be procured somewhere. Will you gentlemen come with me?"

But Skshetuski, Longin and the little knight protested, and began to scold Zagloba, who excused himself as well as he was able.

"I did not intend to drop a hint," he said, "for I prefer to give away something of my own, than to accept from another, but when such an exalted person gives an invitation it would be boorish to refuse."

"Come with me," said the chief, "for I like to be in pleasant company, and as no firing is going on, we can seize the occasion. I cannot invite you to lunch, for even horse-meat is scarce now, but I have still two bottles of gorzalka, which I do not intend to keep for myself."

The others still hesitated, but after being repeatedly urged, they consented and went along. Pan Stempovski hurried before them and managed to find a few biscuits and some bits of horse-meat. Zagloba cheered up wonderfully and said:

"May it please God that His Majesty the King, may come to our aid, then we will at once make an attack upon the wagon-loads of provisions that his militia bring with them. They always carry a great number of delicacies, and all of them care more for their stomachs than for the Commonwealth. I would rather eat with them than have their assistance in battle, but perhaps they may show greater valor under the eyes of the king."

The chief grew serious.

"We have vowed," said he, "to fall one after the other, rather than to surrender, and so it must be; we must prepare for still harder times. The provisions are giving out, and what it still worse, the powder is also. I would not say this to others, but to you I can speak freely. Soon nothing will be left to us but grim determination in our hearts, swords in our hands, and the readiness to die. May it please God to send us the king soon, for this is our last hope. The king is a soldier, and to deliver us he would spare neither comfort nor life, but his army is small, and you gentlemen know how slowly the general militia move. And how should the king know in what straits we are and that we are living upon crumbs."

"We have resolved to sacrifice ourselves," said Skshetuski.

"But cannot we send word to the king?" asked Zagloba.

"If we could find a man of such virtue as to undertake to make his way to the king by stealing through the enemy's camp," said the chief, "he would achieve immortal fame; he would become the savior of the whole army, and would avert grave disaster from our country. Even if all the forces have not assembled yet, the mere knowledge that the king was near might disperse the rebels. But who will go, who will undertake it in face of the fact that Khmyelnitski has every road so well guarded that not the smallest mouse could slip through? An undertaking of this sort means certain death."

"But what have we wits for?" said Zagloba. "A good idea strikes me already."

"What is it, what is it?" asked the chief.

"Every day we are taking a number of prisoners, what about bribing one of them? He could say that he had escaped from us, and he could hurry on to the king."

"I will bring the idea before the prince," said the chief.

Longin was deep in thought; his forehead was covered with wrinkles; he sat silent. Suddenly he raised his head and said, in his usual mild tone:

"I will undertake to steal through the Cossacks."

The knights sprang up in astonishment as they heard this. Zagloba stood with his mouth open, Volodiyovski twirled his little moustache, Skshetuski grew pale, and Krasnostavsk, striking his velvet vest, exclaimed: "You will undertake this?"

"Have you considered well what you say?" asked Skshetuski.

"I have thought over it for some time," replied the Lithuanian, "for this is not the first time that the knights have said 'if the king only knew of our condition!' And hearing this, I said to myself, 'If God permits me to fulfill my vow I will go at once!' I am but of small worth anyway, what would it signify even should I perish on the way."

"But you will certainly perish," said Zagloba. "Do you hear that the chief says it is sure death?"

"What does that matter, little brother?" said Longin, "if it please God He will guide me through in safety, if not, He will reward me in Heaven."

"Man alive, have you lost your senses?" said Zagloba. "First they will torture you and then put you to a horrible death."

"Even so I will go, little brother," replied the Lithuanian gently.

"A bird could not fly through without being pierced by an arrow. They have surrounded us like a badger in a hole."

"Nevertheless, I will go," repeated the Lithuanian. "I owe God thanks for allowing me to fulfill my vow."

"Look at him! examine him closely!" Zagloba cried in desperation, "you might as well have your head cut off at once and have it shot from a cannon over the camp, for this is the only way you can get past them."

"Permit me, my friends, I pray you," said the Lithuanian, clasping his hands.

"Oh, no! you shall not go by yourself, for I will go with you," said Skshetuski.

"And I, too," added Volodiyovski, striking his sword.

"The bullets strike you!" cried Zagloba, placing his hands to his head, "may the bullets strike you for your 'I too, I too,'

for your audacity. They haven't seen enough blood yet, nor of destruction, nor bullets! Is it not enough what is happening here? No, they want to be more certain of losing their heads. Go to the deuce and let me alone! May the enemy kill you." . . . .

Then he rushed around the tent as if mad.

"God is punishing me," he cried, "for associating with whirlwinds, instead of living in the company of sensible men. Well, it serves me right."

He paced the tent for some time in feverish excitement, finally he stopped near Skshetuski, clasped his hands, and looking into his eyes, began to snort with anger:

"Have I done you any wrong, that you are planning my ruin?"

"God forbid!" answered the knight, "what do you mean?"

"I am not surprised that Longin gets such notions. He has always had his wit in his fist instead of his head, and since he chopped off the heads of the three biggest fools among the Turks, he has become the fourth one——"

"That is not a nice thing to say," interrupted the Lithuanian.

"And I am not surprised at that fellow, either," said Zagloba, pointing at Volodiyovski; "he can jump on a Cossack's boot or cling to his breeches like a burr to a dog's tail; he can get through easier than any of us. Neither of them have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. But that you, instead of restraining their madness, spur them on by being willing to go yourself; that you should desire to deliver all four of us over to certain martyrdom; that is the worst blow of all. Fie! the deuce take it, I did not expect such madness from an officer whom the prince himself esteems as a sensible cavalier."

"How is that! all four?" asked Skshetuski, astonished, "will you go, too?"

"Yes," cried Zagloba, thumping himself on his chest. "If one of you go, or all go together, I will go too. My blood be on your heads, next time I shall know with whom to associate. This knowledge I have paid dearly for."

"O that you would . . . . " said Skshetuski. The three knights embraced him; but he was really angry and pushed them from him with his elbows, saying:

"Go to the devil, I don't want your Judas kisses."

The thunder of cannons and muskets resounded from the ramparts. Zagloba started and cried, "there you have it, there you have it, now go."

"It is only ordinary firing, the testing of the guns," remarked Skshetuski.

"Ordinary firing," repeated Zagloba, mimicking him; "pray is not this enough for you, half the army has melted away under this ordinary firing, and these fellows now turn up their noses at it."

"Be calm!" said Longin.

"Keep qiet, beet-soup-swiller!" roared Zagloba, "you are the most guilty, you concocted the whole scheme, if no one is mad, I am mad."

"But I shall go nevertheless, little brother," answered Longin.

"You'll go, you'll go, and I know why, don't pretend to be a hero, you are too well known for that; you are tired of virtue, and you want to take it outside the ramparts and sell it. You are nothing but a wench who takes her virtue to the market. Fie on you! that's what you are, you do not really desire to hasten to the king, you desire to roam through the villages like a horse through the pasture, behold! a nice knight, who offers his virtue for sale! Sheer bitterness! sheer bitterness! as I love God."

"It is shameful to listen to him," cried Longin, clapping his hands over his ears.

"Stop this quarreling," said Skshetuski, earnestly. "Let us speak about the business."

"In God's name!" said the chief, who had listened in astonishment to Zagloba, "this is a matter of great importance, but without the prince you cannot decide anything. There is no need of further discussion. You gentlemen are in service and obliged to obey orders. The prince is, I presume, in his quarters, let us see what he thinks of your offer."

"Exactly what I think," remarked Zagloba, and hope brightened his face. "Let us make haste."

They went on and passed through the square, where the enemy's bullets were falling. The soldiers were on the ramparts, which, from a distance, looked like booths at a fair, over them hung clothes of various colors and sheepskins, and they were packed with wagons, portions of tents, and all sorts of other articles that might serve as a protection against the continuous volleys which for weeks had ceased neither by night nor by day. Above these odds and ends appeared a bluish line of smoke and behind them rows of soldiers in red and yellow uniforms, working hard against the nearest

entrenchments of the enemy. The square looked like a heap of ruins; the level space had been dug up with spades, trampled by horses, and not a green blade of grass was showing. Here and there were mounds of earth freshly turned over about newly-made wells, remains of broken wagons, cannon, barrels, or heaps of bones whitening in the sun. No dead horses could be seen, for these were immediately removed to serve as food for the soldiers, but everywhere were heaps of rusty iron balls, which fell every day upon this small bit of ground. At every step the horror and misery of war was betrayed. On their way the knights met small groups of soldiers, some carrying wounded or dead, others hurrying to the ramparts to relieve their weary comrades. The faces of all were blackened, sunken, unshaven; their eyes were red and inflamed, their uniforms faded and torn, their heads were covered with dirty rags instead of helmets and caps, their weapons were broken. The thought forced itself upon one, "when one or two weeks have passed what will become of this little handful of victims?"

"You see, gentlemen," said the chief, "it is high time that the king should know our condition."

"Famine is showing its teeth already like a dog," said the little knight.

"What will happen when we have eaten up the horses?" asked Skshetuski.

Conversing thus they reached the tent of the prince on the right side of the ramparts, in front of which stood a few aides on horseback, whose duty it was to take the prince's orders through the camp. The poor beasts, fed on dried and chopped-up horse-flesh, and tortured by an incessant, internal burning, reared continually and were unable to remain on one spot. This was the case with the horses of the entire cavalry, which, when they went out against the enemy, looked like a herd of griffins or hippo-centaurs, seeming to be more in the air, than chasing along the ground.

"Is the prince within," asked the chief of one of the orderlies.

"He is closeted with Pan Pshiyemski," answered the orderly.

The chief entered without announcing himself, but the four knights remained outside. After awhile the flap of the tent was pushed aside and Pan Pshiyemski stuck his head through the opening. "The prince wishes to see you at once," he said.

Zagloba entered the tent in good spirits, for he hoped that the Prince would not consent to let his best knights go to certain destruction; but he was mistaken, for ere they could bow to him he said:

"Pan Krasnostavsk has told me of your readiness to go from the camp and I accept your service. There is no sacrifice too great for the country."

"We merely came to ask for your permission," said Skshetuski, "for your Highness is master of our lives."

"I understand that all four of you wish to go."

"Your Highness," said Zagloba, "they want to go, but not I. God is my witness that I have not come here to praise myself or to recall my services, and if I do so it is merely to save me from the suspicion of being thought a coward. Skshetuski, Volodiyovski, and Pan Longin Myshykishki are great knights, but Burlay, who fell beneath my hand (not to mention other deeds)was also a great warrior, equal to Burdabut, Bohun, and the three heads of the janissaries. Therefore, as regards valor I do not stand behind the others, but valor and madness are not to be confounded. We have no wings and we can't get through on land that is certain."

"You will not go then?" asked the prince.

"I said that I did not wish to go, not that I will not go. Since God has punished me by making me their comrade, I must remain with them while I live. If things go badly the sword of Zagloba will be of some service. But I fail to comprehend how the death of the four of us can be of any benefit, and I confide in your Highness to save us from it by refusing to allow this insane expedition."

"You are a good comrade," replied the prince, "and it proves your faithfulness that you do not wish to part with your friends, but your confidence in me is misplaced, for I accept the offer."

"The dog is dead," muttered Zagloba, letting his hands drop.

Firley the Castellan of Belsk now entered the tent. "Your Highness," said he, "my men have just captured a Cossack who says that there will be an assault to-night."

"I have already been informed of it," replied the prince, "everything is ready, but let the work be hastened on the ramparts."

"They are nearly finished."

"Very well," said the prince, "before evening we will occupy them."

Then he turned to the four knights:

"After the assault, if the night is dark, will be the best time to start out."

"Why," said the castellan of Belsk, "is your Grace preparing a sally?"

"The sally is another matter," said the prince. "I myself shall lead it, but now we are speaking of something else. These gentlemen undertake to steal their way through the enemy's camp and to notify the king about the condition of affairs."

The castellan was dumbfounded, he opened wide his eyes and stared at the knights in turn. The prince smiled with pleasure. It was his weakness, he liked to have his soldiers admired.

"In God's name," said the castellan, "are there such brave hearts in the world? God knows, gentlemen, I shall not attempt to dissuade you from so brave a deed."

Zagloba grew purple with rage, but he said nothing he merely growled like a bear. The prince thought for a while and said: "However, gentlemen, I do not want to waste your blood in vain, and I will not consent to have all four of you go together. First one shall go; should he be killed, the enemy will not be backward in boasting about it, as they had boasted about the death of my servant, whom they caught near Lemberg. Should the first one be killed, the second shall go, and then, in case of necessity, the third and fourth. It may be that the first one will be fortunate enough to get through, in such a case I do not wish to risk the lives of the others."

"Your Highness," interrupted Skshetuski.

"This is my will and my command," said Yeremy, with emphasis. "And that there may be no disagreement, I declare that he shall go first who offered himself first."

"It was I," said Pan Longin, with a face beaming with happiness.

"Then to-night after the assault, if the night be dark," added the prince. "I shall send no letters to the king. Tell what you have seen; take my signet ring as a credential."

Podbipyenta took the signet and bowed low before the prince, who, placing his hands upon his head, kissed him repeatedly upon the forehead, saying in a voice broken with emotion:

"You are as close to my heart as a brother. May the God of Hosts and our Queen of Angels guide and protect you through the enemy's lines, soldier of God, Amen."

"Amen," repeated the Starosta of Krasnostavsk, Pan Pshi-Yemski, and the Castellan of Belsk.

The prince's eyes were swimming in tears, for he was a true father to the knights. The others wept, and Podbipyenta shivered as of a fever, and a flame passed through his bones; this pure, humble, heroic soul was greatly rejoiced by the hope of the coming sacrifice.

"You will go down in history," cried the Castellan of Belsk.

"Not to us, not to us, but to Thy name O Lord, let the glory be given," repeated the prince.

The knights left the tent.

"Whew! Something seized me by the throat and chokes me, and in my mouth is a taste as bitter as wormwood," said Zagloba. "And over there (pointing to the smoking earthworks of the Cossacks) they still keep on firing. . . . Oh, that the lightning might strike you! Oh, it is a hard life in this world! Longin, must you really go? May the Holy Angels protect you! O, that a plague might choke those peasants!"

"I must leave you now," said Longin.

"Why, where are you going?" asked Zagloba.

"To the priest Mukhovietski, to confession, my dear friend. I must cleanse my sinful soul."

Then Podbipyenta hurried to the castle; the others turned towards the ramparts. Skshetuski and Pan Michael were silent, but Zagloba said:

"Something holds me by the throat. I did not think that I should feel such sorrow for him, but he is the most virtuous man in the world. If ever any one disputes this I'll slap his snout for him. My God! my God! I thought the castellan of Belsk would advise against this folly, but no, he assisted the prince with his drum. The devil brought us that heretic. 'You will go down in history,' he said. 'History will write of you.' Let it write of him, but not on the skin of Longin. Why in the world does he not go himself? He has six toes on his feet like every Calvinist, and therefore can run all the better. I tell you, gentlemen, that it is getting worse and worse in this world, and no doubt the priest Jabkovski prophecies correctly when he says that the end of the world is near. Let us sit down awhile at the

ramparts, and then go to the castle in order to enjoy the company of our friend, at least until evening."

But Longin spent the whole time after confession and communion, in prayer. He did not make his appearance until evening, when the assault had begun. This was a terrible assault, for the Cossacks attacked just when the troops were transporting their artillery and wagons to the newly made ramparts. It seemed for a time that the little Polish army must succumb before the fierce onset of two hundred thousand of the enemy. The Polish forces had become so mixed up with their foes that they could not distinguish their own and three times they closed in. Khmyelnitski put forth all his power, for the Khan and his own captains had told him that this must be the last assault, and that henceforward they would content themselves with starving the besieged. But within three hours all attacks were repulsed with such losses that later a report spread that forty thousand of the enemy had fallen. So much is certain, that after the battle, a great bundle of flags were brought to the prince, and that this in reality was the last assault. But harder times followed for the besieged, continuous firing, undermining of their ramparts, loss of their wagons, suffering and famine.

Immediately after the assault the untiring Yeremy led his weary troops to a sally, which completed the defeat of the enemy. Quiet now reigned in the tabor and the camp.

The night was warm but cloudy. In the darkness four men made their way carefully and quietly to the eastern end of the ramparts. They were Longin, Zagloba, Skshetuski and Pan Michael.

"Take good care of the pistols," whispered Skshetuski, "lest they should get wet. Two squadrons will be in readiness all night. If you fire we shall rush to the rescue."

"It is confoundedly dark, nothing can be seen even by straining the eyes," whispered Zagloba.

"So much the better," answered Longin.

"Keep still," interrupted Pan Michael. "I hear something."

"It is nothing, the rattle of a dying man."

"I would you were already near the oaks."

"O God! my God!" sighed Zagloba, trembling as if in a fever, "in three hours it will begin to dawn."

"Then it is time now," said Longin.

"Yes, the time has come," repeated Skshetuski, with a choking voice. "God be with you!"

"God be with you! God be with you!"

"Farewell, brothers, and forgive me if I have offended any of you."

"You offend! O God!" exclaimed Zagloba, throwing himself into his arms.

Then Skshetuski and Pan Michael embraced him. For a moment suppressed sobs shook the breasts of the knights. Only Longin was calm although he was deeply affected.

"Farewell," he repeated once more, and going to the edge of the rampart, he dropped into the ditch and after awhile appeared on the opposite bank. Once more he waved a farewell to his friends, and disappeared into the darkness.

Between the road to Zaloshtsits and the highway leading from Vishnyovyets there was an oak grove, interspersed by narrow meadows. Near by was an old and dense pine forest which extended beyond Zaloshtsits It was towards this that Longin attempted to make his way.

The way was very dangerous, for in order to reach the grove, he was obliged to pass all along the Cossack entrenchments. Longin, however, had purposely chosen this way, for it was just around the camp, where people were continually passing to and fro throughout the night, that the guards paid least attention to the passers by. All other roads, ravines, thickets, and paths, were beset with guards who were patrolled continually by sergeants, setniks, colonels, and even by Khmyelnitski himself. A passage across the meadows, along the Gniezna could not be thought of, for there the Tartar herders kept guard over the horses from evening until dawn.

It was a cloudy night, and so dark that nothing, neither man nor tree, could be seen at a distance of ten steps. This circumstance was favorable to Longin; though on the other hand he was obliged to walk very slowly and carefully, lest he should fall into one of the ditches or pits that covered the entire battle-field and had been dug by Polish and Cossack hands. In this manner he reached the second Polish rampart that had been evacuated just before evening, and after he had crossed the ditch, he crawled towards the entrenchments of the Cossacks. He stopped and listened, the entrenchments were empty. The sortie made by Yeremy had driven the enemy out, and they had either fallen, or had

fled to the wagon-train. A number of corpses lay upon the slopes and tops of the mounds. Longin stumbled every moment over bodies as he picked his way over them. From time to time a groan or a sigh indicated that life in some of them was not extinct.

Beyond the ramparts was a spacious tract, extending to the second trench, and this was also full of bodies. Here there were still more holes and ditches, besides at a small distance from each other, were earth shelters looking like hayricks in the darkness. These were also deserted, and everywhere the most profound silence reigned. Nowhere a fire or a man were visible, no one on the entire plain except the fallen.

Pan Longin started to pray for the souls of the deceased and continued his journey. The sounds of the Polish camp, which followed him to the second rampart, grew fainter and fainter until they were lost in the distance. Pan Longin stopped and looked back for the last time.

He could scarcely see anything for no light was burning in the camp, only one little window of the castle twinkled faintly like a star, or like a glow worm which gleams out and darkens in turn.

"My brethren, shall I see you again in this life?" thought Longin.

Sadness pressed upon him like a heavy stone, he could hardly breathe. There where that little light was shining, there were his friends, his brother hearts, Prince Yeremy, Skshetuski, Pan Michael, Zagloba, the priest Mukhovietski—he was loved, there he would be gladly defended. But here—night, desolation, darkness, corpses about his feet, looming apparitions, before him the entrenchments of the blood thirsty, accursed and pitiless enemy.

The weight of sadness pressed so heavily upon the shoulders of this giant that his courage began to fail.

Dreadful alarm haunted him and whispered in his ear "You can't get through, it isn't possible. Return now, while there is still time! discharge your pistol, an entire squadron will hasten to your aid! Through those defenses, through those savages, nothing can pass."

That starving camp hourly sprinkled with ballls, filled with death, and the stench of corpses, appeared to Longin now as a quiet, safe retreat. His friends there would not upbraid him if he returned. He would tell them that the deed was

beyond human power, they themselves should not go, nor should they send another, they would await further for the mercy of God and the coming of the king.

But if Skshetuski should go nevertheless, and perish:

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! these are temptations of the devil," thought Longin. "I am prepared to die and nothing worse can happen to me. Thus Satan frightens the weak soul with desolation, darkness, and corpses, for he makes use of everything. Should a knight heap shame upon himself, lose his fame, disgrace his name, not save the army, renounce a celestial crown? Never!"

And he went on with his hands extended forward.

Now he again heard a noise, but not from the Polish camp, but from the opposite side. It was still indistinct, but deep and threatening like the growling of a bear who suddenly awakens in a dark forest. But unrest had now left the soul of the knight, sadness had ceased to oppress him and was transformed into a sweet remembrance of his dearest friends. At length, as if in answer to the threatening murmur that came from the entrenchments, he repeated once more to himself:

"But still I will go."

After some time he reached that part of the battle-field, where on the day of the first assault, the prince's cavalry had put the Cossacks and janissaries to flight. Here the way was more even, there being fewer ditches, earth shelters, and but few corpses, for the Cossacks had removed the dead that had fallen in earlier struggles. It was clearer here too, the ground was not so covered with obstacles. The land sloped towards the south, but Longin at once turned towards the flank, in order to creep through between the western lake and the wagon train.

He could get over the ground now much faster, for there were less impediments, and he had almost reached the line of the wagon train, when a new noise attracted his attention.

He halted at once and after waiting for a quarter of an hour he could distinguish the tramp and the breathing of horses. "Cossack patrols," thought he. Now the voices of men reached his ear. He sprang aside and as soon as he felt a depression in the ground with his foot, he threw himself upon the earth and lay there motionless, holding his pistol in one hand and his sword in the other.

The horsemen came still nearer and soon were right upon

him. It was so dark he could not count them, but he could hear every word of their conversation.

"It is hard for them, but it is hard for us also," said one, in a sleepy voice, "and how many good warriors have bitten the dust."

"Queen of Heaven," said another voice. "They say the king is not far away. . . . what will happen to us then?"

"The Khan is angered at our leader, and the Tartars are threatening to put chains upon us."

"On the pastures they fight with our men. Our father has forbidden us to enter the horse enclosures, for whoever enters is lost."

"They say that among the market men are disguised Poles, I wish that this war had never broken out."

"We are worse off now than before."

"The king is in the vicinity with the Polish army, that is the worst of it."

"Hey! in Sich you would be sleeping at this hour, but here you have to knock about in the darkness like a vampire."

"There must be vampires about, for the horses are snorting."

The voices grew fainter and fainter in the distance until they could be heard no more. Longin rose and went on.

A drizzling rain, fine as mist, came on; it grew still darker. To the left of Longin at some distance off, there gleamed a small light, then a second, a third, a tenth, and so on. Now he was sure that he was on the line of the wagon train. The little lights were set far apart and emitted but a feeble glimmer. Probably everybody was asleep, or perhaps here and there some might be drinking or preparing food for the morrow.

"Thank God that I came out after the assault and the sally. They are no doubt tired unto death," said Longin to himself.

Scarcely had he said this, when he heard anew the trampling of horses. It was another patrol. The ground about had been torn up a good deal, so that it offered good hiding places. The patrol passed by so near that he was almost run over. Fortunately the horses were used to prostrate bodies and did not become frightened. Longin went on.

Within a distance of about a thousand steps, he met two more patrols. Evidently the whole entire circle about was guarded like the apple of the eye, but Longin was only glad that he did not meet any of the infantry sentries, who are

generally stationed before the wagon trains, in order to give notice to the patrols.

His joy, however, was of short duration. He had hardly gone ahead one furlong, when scarce ten steps in front of him, a dark figure emerged. Longin, though of undaunted courage, felt a slight chill pass through his body. It was too late to retreat and to skirt around the sentinel. The figure approached, he must have been noticed, a moment of hesitation followed, then a husky voice asked:

"Vasil, is that you?"

"It is I," replied Longin.

"Have you the gorzalka?"

"Yes, I have it."

"Give it to me."

Longin approached him.

"Why are you so big?" asked the voice, in terror stricken tones.

Something staggered in the darkness. A cry of "God——" instantly smothered, issued from the mouth of the guard. Then a crunching was heard like that of breaking bones, a rattling from the throat, and a figure fell noiselessly to the ground.

Longin went on.

But he skirted about, as he had evidently struck a line of patrol; he approached closer to the wagon train in order to pass between the pickets and the line of wagons. If there was no line of pickets here Longin could meet none but pickets going out to relieve others, for there were no mounted patrols here.

It was soon apparent that there was not a second line, the line of wagons, however, was not further away than a couple of bow shots. Strangely he seemed to be getting nearer to it, although he attempted always to remain at an equal distance. It was evident also that all were not asleep about here. He could see groups sitting around smouldering fires. In one place the fire was brighter, so bright that its gleam almost discovered Longin, and he was obliged to retreat back towards the pickets so as not to get into the belt of light. From a distance he could distinguish oxen suspended from posts near the fire, which were being skinned by butchers. Groups of men watched this proceeding; some were playing upon pipes; it was evident that this was the part of the camp occupied by the drovers. The other rows of wagons were hidden by the darkness.

The line of the bulwark which was faintly illuminated again appeared to get nearer to him. At first he had only had it on his right, now he suddenly found it just in front of him.

He stopped and considered what was best to be done. The bulwark and the camps of the Tartars and the "blacks" surrounded Zbaraj, like a ring, within this ring sentries were posted and patrols were moving about to see that no one should pass.

Longin was in a terrible position. He would either have to creep through between the wagons or seek another way between the Cossacks and the Tartars. Otherwise he would have to roam about the outer circle until dawn, or return to Zbaraj. But even in the latter case he might fall into the hands of the enemies. He understood, however, that one wagon could not be crowded up closely to another because of the nature of the ground. There ought to be considerable openings; besides such openings were necessary for intercourse and exit. . . Longin determined to look for such a passage and so again approached the row of wagons. The light of fires burning here and there might betray him, but on the other hand they were useful, for without them, he could see neither the wagons nor the passage ways between them.

After searching carefully for about a quarter of an hour, he found such a passage-way and readily recognized it, for it looked like a black belt. There were no fires on it and there could be no Cossacks, for this was a road that must be left for the horsemen. Longin got on all fours and commenced to creep along that dark opening like a snake into its hole.

A quarter of an hour; a half hour passed, and he was still creeping, praying, and commending his body and soul to the protection of heaven. He called to mind that the fate of Zbaraj depended on his passing through this gully. He prayed not only for himself, but also for those who at the moment were praying within the ramparts for him. All was quiet on both sides of him. No one stirred, not a horse snorted, not a dog barked, and Longin luckily crept through. Before him he already saw dark bushes, behind which was the oak grove, and beyond that the forest continued as far as Toporova; beyond the forest was the king, safety, glory, and merit, in the eyes of God and man. What was the stroke by which he cut off three heads in comparison to this deed which required something else than an iron hand.

Longin felt the difference, but his clean heart was not

swelled by pride, like that of a child it melted in tears of thankfulness.

Then he arose from the ground and walked on, beyond the wagons there were but few pickets; if any, those could be easily avoided. It began to rain harder and the rain pattering upon the bushes, drowned his footsteps. He let his long legs out and went on like a giant, trampling everything in his way; each step was equal to five of an ordinary man. The wagons were left further in the distance, the oak grove drew ever nearer, and in it was salvation.

The oaks were at hand, beneath them it was as dark as under the earth; but so much the better. A light breeze sprang up. The oaks rustled as if breathing a prayer, "Almighty God! Gracious God! preserve this knight! for he is Thy servant and a faithful son of the land on which we have grown with Thy glory."

One mile and a half separated Longin from the Polish camp. Perspiration covered his brow, for the air was peculiarly sultry, as if a storm were gathering; but he hurried on regardless of the storm, for the angels were singing in his heart. The grove became thinner, and this meant the first meadow was close by. The oaks rustled louder, as if they wished to say, "Wait awhile yet, you are safe with us." But the knight has no time and steps out into the open meadow. A solitary oak, taller than the rest, stands in the centre, towards this Longin moves.

Suddenly, when he was but a few steps away from the giant oak, about twenty dark figures rushed out from beneath its branches, and sped like wolves towards the knight.

"Who are you, who are you?"

Their language was unintelligible. The covering of their heads were pointed.

These were Tartar herders, who had sought shelter here from the rain.

At that moment red lightning illumined the field, revealing the oak, the wild figures, and the gigantic knight. A terrible cry rent the air, in a moment the battle began.

The Tartars threw themselves at Longin like wolves at a deer, and clutched him with their sinewy hands; but he only shook himself, and his assailants fell from him as ripe fruit from a tree. Then his terrible sword, "Cowl-cutter," flew from its sheath, and soon resounded groans, howls, shouts for help, the whistling of the sword, the cries of the wounded,

PAN LONGIN'S LAST FIGHT.

the neighing of horses, and the crash of broken Tartar sabres. The quiet field echoed with all the wild sounds that can be uttered by the human throat.

The Tartars hurled themselves in packs at the knight, but he leaned his back against the oak, and defended himself in front with his whirling sword, which cut and slashed in a terrible manner. Bodies lay stretched at the feet of the knight, the others fell back panic stricken.

"A div! a div!" they howled out in terror.

The howling was not in vain. Scarce a half hour passed before the whole meadow was filled with people afoot and on horseback. Cossacks and Tartars flocked with scythes, clubs, bows, poles, and burning pitch pine. Excited questions began to fly from mouth to mouth. "What is the matter, what has happened?" "A div!" answered the herders. "A div!" repeated the crowd, "a Pole, a monster, beat him, take him alive, alive."

Longin fired two shots from his pistol, but the distance was too great for them to be heard from the Polish camp. Now the crowd approached him in a semi-circle, he stood in the shadow of the tree, looming like a giant, with his back against its trunk, and waited, his sword in his hand. The crowd came nearer and nearer. Finally a voice of command called out:

"Seize him!"

All who had not bitten the dust rushed at him; the shouting ceased; those who could not get at him held lights for the assailants. A confused crowd of men struggled beneath the tree, groans arose and for a time it was impossible to distinguish anything. Finally a cry of terror arose from the assailants. The crowd dispersed in a moment.

Beneath the tree stood Pan Longin alone, and at his feet a crowd of bodies quivering in their death throes.

"Ropes, ropes!" shouted a voice.

Several horsemen flew away and in a moment brought back ropes. Then a number of strong men seized a long rope by both ends and tried to tie Longin to the tree; but he slashed with his sword and the men on both sides fell to the ground. A second attempt was followed by the same result.

Perceiving that too many men in a crowd only get in each other's way, a number of the boldest Nogais tried again to capture the giant alive; but he rent them like a wild boar rends the attacking dogs. The oak, which consisted of two

mighty trees that had grown together, protected the knight in its central depression; whoever in front got within ranage of his sword died without uttering a groan. The superhuman strength of Longin seemed to increase with each moment. Seeing this the maddened hordes drove away the Cossacks and all round resounded a wild cry:

"Bows, bows!"

When he saw the bows, and the arrows poured out from their quivers at the feet of his assailants, Longin recognized that the hour of his death had arrived, and he began to say the litany of the most Holy Virgin.

Silence fell, the crowd held its breath in expectation of what would happen. The first arrow whizzed forth just as Longin repeated "Mother of the Redeemer," and it grazed his temple, another arrow flew forth as Longin said "O Blessed Virgin," and it stuck fast in his shoulder. The words of the litany mingled with the whizzing of the arrows and when Longin had said "Star of the morning" arrows were sticking in his shoulders, in his sides, and legs. Blood oozing from a wound in his temple flowed over his eyes; he saw as through a mist, the meadow, and the Tartars. Presently he heard no longer the whizzing of arrows; he felt that his strength was forsaking him, that his legs were bending beneath him: his head dropped on his breast. For the last time he fell on his knees. Then he said in a half groan, "Queen of the Angels," and these were his last words on earth.

The hosts in heaven received his soul and placed it as a translucent pearl at the feet of the Queen of the Angels.

THIS IS THE SECOND.

CHAPTER VI.

On the next morning Pan Volodiyovski and Zagloba were standing on the ramparts among the soldiers, looking attentively towards the hostile camp, from whence a dense mass was approaching. Skshetuski was in consultation with the prince; but they took advantage of this moment of peace to speak about the events of the preceding day and about the present movements in the enemy's camp.

"That is not a good omen," said Zagloba, pointing at the black mass that moved along like a gigantic cloud. "They surely come to the assault again and here the hands are stiff."

"They will scarce think of making an assault in broad daylight and at this time," said the little knight, "all they will do will be to take possession of our rampart of yesterday, undermine the new one, and fire upon us from morning until evening."

"We could easily decimate them with the cannon."

Pan Michael lowered his voice and answered: "The powder is getting scarce. I have heard it will not suffice for six days if we use as much as we have lately. But the king will surely be here before that."

"I care not what happens, if only our poor Longin gets through all right. I could not sleep all night for thinking of him; and whenever I fell into a doze I saw him in danger and was so alarmed that I perspired all over. He is the best man that can be found in the Commonwealth, even if you looked all over the land with a lantern for three years and six Sundays."

"But why did you always turn him into ridicule?"

"Because my mouth is dirtier than my heart. Don't make my heart bleed with recollections, dear Michael, for I have reproached myself enough already, and God forbid that any disaster befall Pan Longin, for I would find no peace till the day of my death."

"You must not grieve so long. He never was angered at

you and I often heard him say 'an evil mouth, but a golden heart.'"

"God give health to this good friend! He never knew how to talk, but his great virtue made up a hundredfold for this deficiency. What do you think, Pan Michael, will he get through all right?"

"The night was dark and the peasants were tired and worn out after the defeat. Our sentinels were not in good condition, theirs must have been much less so."

"Praise be to God! I asked Longin to find out whether our poor princess had been seen anywhere, for I think Jendzian must have escaped with her to the royal army. Longin will hardly take a rest, and will surely come here with the king. In that case we shall soon hear of her."

"I put faith in the wit of that fellow Jendzian, and I trust that in some manner he has saved her. Should she have perished I could never be happy again in this life. I only knew her for a short time, but had I one I could not love a sister more."

"She was a sister to you, but to me a daughter. These cares will doubtless make my beard as white as snow, and break my heart. Hardly do you learn to love anybody, when, one, two, three, and that one is gone. And all that is left for you is to sit and worry, and grieve, and torment yourself, and brood, going about with an empty stomach and a cap full of holes, through which water falls upon your bald pate as through a poorly-thatched roof. Dogs are better off in the Commonwealth nowadays than the nobles, and we four are the worst off of all. It is time to go to a better world, Pan Michael. What do you think?"

"More than once I have wondered whether it would not be better to tell Skshetuski everything. But I am restrained from doing so because he never mentions her name, and if any one happens to mention it he starts as if his heart had been pierced."

"Tell him all about it now; open the wounds that have healed in this fire of war, leaving but a scar behind, while now, perhaps, some Tartar is dragging her by the hair over the Perekop. I see wax-tapers (funeral) when I think of such an end. It is about time to die; it cannot be otherwise; for there is nothing on earth but affliction. If only Pan Longin has a happy escape!"

"Heaven must favor him more than others, for he is vir-

tuous. But look! what is the rabble doing over yonder? The sun is so dazzling to-day that I can't see."

"They are digging under our newly made rampart of yesterday."

"I said that there would be an assault. Let us depart, Pan Michael, we have stood here long enough."

"They are not digging in order to make an assault at all events; they must make an open road for retreat, and they will probably bring up their engines on which their gunners are stationed; just see how their spades are flying; already they have leveled the ground for about forty paces."

"Now I see, though the glare is dazzling to-day."

Zagloba covered his eyes with his hand and looked attentively. The blacks rushed through the cut dug into the rampart and immediately spread over the bare space between the ramparts. Some began to fire at once, others, digging up the ground, began to heap up a new rampart to enclose the Polish camp with a third ring.

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed Pan Michael, "did I not say so? They are rolling up the engines already."

"Well then, the assault will be very lively. Let us go," said Zagloba.

"No, these are another kind of engines," said the little knight.

Indeed the machines that had appeared in the opening were built upon a different plan from the usual kind. Their walls consisted of ladders fastened with hasps and covered with cloths and skins; behind these from the middle of the machine up to the top the best marksmen were ensconced.

"Let us go, let those dogs worry on," exclaimed Zagloba.

"Wait awhile," replied Volodiyovski.

He began to count the engines in order, noting each new one as it appeared in the opening.

"One, two, three . . . . it is evident that they have quite a number . . . . four, five, six . . . . they are still coming . . . . seven, eight . . . . they will kill every dog on the square, for those must be their best marksmen . . . . nine, ten . . . . each one stands out distinctly for the sun shines upon them . . . . eleven . . . . "

Suddenly Pan Michael ceased counting.

"What is that?" he asked in a voice of astonishment.

"Where?"

"There upon the highest one . . . . a man is hanging."

Zagloba strained his eyes. Indeed the sun was shining upon the body of a man dangling by a rope from the highest engine, and swaying to and fro with its motion.

"True," said Zagloba.

Pan Michael suddenly became as pale as linen and cried out in accents of terror:

"Almighty God! It is Podbipyenta!"

A murmur rose on the ramparts as when a wind blows through a forest. Zagloba bent his head, covered his eyes with his hand, and with blue lips groaned out:

"Jesus Maria! Jesus Maria!"

Now the murmur changed into a babel of confused words, and then into a roar like storming waves. The soldiers on the ramparts saw that on that rope of infamy was hanging Pan Longin Podbipyenta, the sharer of their misfortune, the spotless knight. And anger, terrible anger, caused the hair of the soldiers to stand on end.

Zagloba at last took his hands from his eyes. He was fearful to look upon. His face was blue, his eyes were protruding and he foamed at the mouth.

"Blood! blood!" he roared, with so terrible a voice, that a shiver passed through the bystanders.

He sprang into the ditch. Everything alive upon the ramparts plunged after him. No power on earth, not even the command of the prince could have restrained this outburst of fury. They climbed out of the ditch, scrambling over each other, seizing with their hands and teeth the bank of the ditch, and when one was over he rushed off blindly, not looking to see if others followed.

The infernal engines were smoking like pitch-ovens, and shook with the thunder of discharges. But this did not deter the assailants. Zagloba rushed ahead, swinging his sword over his head and raging like a mad bull. The Cossacks sprang against the assailants with flails and scythes. It seemed as if two walls were tumbling over each other with a tremendous crash. But the well-fed pack of hounds could not defend themselves long against the hungry and maddened wolves. Thrust from their places, cut with swords, torn with teeth, crushed and beaten, the Cossacks could not withstand the furious onslaught. Confusion set in and they fled to the openings. Zagloba, raging, rushed into the densest crowd like a lioness whose cubs have been stolen. He was snorting with rage and he struck down and trampled upon those that op-

posed him; he cleared a way about himself, and nearby like another destroying flame came Volodiyovski, wild as a wounded leopard.

The marksmen, entrenched in the engines, were cut to pieces; the others were driven to the opening in the ramparts. Then the soldiers mounted the engine and untying the body of Pan Longin, they lowered it carefully to the ground.

Zagloba threw himself upon the corpse. . . Volodiyovski's heart was also bleeding, and he wept bitterly at the sight of his dead friend. It was easy to see in what manner Pan Longin had perished, for his whole body was covered with little holes made by the points of arrows. But the face was not disfigured, save for the wound on the temple, that an arrow had made. The few drops of blood had dried up on his cheeks, his eyes were closed, and on his pale face was a peaceful smile. Had it not been for the bluish tint on his face and the rigor of death upon his features, it might have seemed that Pan Longin was sleeping peacefully. His comrades bore him to the ramparts and thence into the chapel of the castle.

By evening a coffin was made, and the funeral took place at night in the churchyard of Zbaraj. All the clergy of Zbaraj were present, except the priest Jabkovski, who had been shot in the back during the last assault and was at the point of death. The prince came also, having for the time being transferred the command to the Chief of Krasnostavsk. There were present also the commanders, the crown ensign, the ensign of Novogorad, Pshiyemski, Skshetuski, Volodiyovski, Zagloba, and all the companions-in-arms of the squadron in which the dead man had served. The coffin was placed by the newly-made grave, and the ceremony began.

The night was calm and starlit. The torches threw their light upon the yellow boards of the hastily-made coffin, upon the figure of the priest, and upon the set faces of the knights standing about.

The smoke rising from the censors filled the air with the odor of myrrh and juniper. The silence was broken only by the stifled sobs of Zagloba. The deep sighs that issued from the strong breasts of the knights, and the distant thunder of cannon on the ramparts.

Now the priest Mukhovietski raised his hand to indicate his desire to speak, the knights therefore held their breath. He was silent for a moment, then he fixed his eyes upon the star-studded firmament and spoke as follows:

"'What knocking do I hear at night on the gate of Heaven?' asks the hoary warden of Christ's kingdom, awakened from sweet slumber. 'Open, Holy Peter, open, it is I, Podbipyenta.'"

"But what rank, what deeds, what merits, can O Podbipyenta bolden thee to trouble the venerable door-keeper? By what right dost thou wish to enter there when neither birth, though even as high as thine, nor senatorial dignity, nor royal offices, nor majesty, nor ever royal purple, is allowed free entrance; where one cannot drive on the broad road in a chariot and six, surrounded by haiduks, but must clamber by the narrow and thorny path of virtue?"

"Ah, open, Holy Peter, open quickly, for by just such a narrow path wandered our mess-mate and dear brother Pan Podbipyenta till he at last appeared before you; came naked like Lazarus, pierced by Pagan arrows like the holy Sebastian, poor like Job, pure as a virgin who has never known a man, pure as a lamb, patient and silent, without a blemish of sin, with the sacrifice of his blood, shed gladly for his earthly fatherland. Admit him, Holy Peter, for if not him then whom wilt thou admit, in these times of corruption and godlessness? Admit him, Holy Peter, admit this innocent lamb and let him graze on the heavenly pasture; let him crop its grass, for he has come hungry from Zbaraj. . . . "

In this manner the priest Mukhovietski commenced his discourse, and then he depicted the whole life of Longin with such eloquence that everyone felt wicked in the presence of the silent coffin that bore the spotless knight, who had surpassed the lowliest in modesty and the greatest in virtue. All struck their breasts and a constantly-growing sorrow oppressed them, as they recognized more clearly what a paroxysm had seized the Fatherland and how irretrievably Zbaraj had lost. The priest continued in inspired words, and when he described how Longin had left the camp and died the death of a martyr, he forgot his rhetoric and quotations, and when he addressed farewell words to the remains of the hero, in the name of the clergy, the commanders, and the army, he burst into tears, and sobbing like Zagloba, continued:

"Farewell, brother! farewell, comrade! not to an earthly, but a celestial King, to the surest tribunal, dost thou bear our lamentations, our hunger, our misery, our suffering and oppression. Thou wilt there more surely effect our deliverance, but thou wilt return no more; therefore do we weep, therefore

do we wet thy coffin with tears, for we loved thee, dearest brother."

All shed tears with the worthy priest, the prince, the commanders, the soldiers, and, most of all, the friends of the deceased. But when the priest began to intone "*requiem aeternam dona ei Domine*!" there arose a general chorus of sobs, though all were strong and accustomed to the sight of death.

When the coffin was placed upon the ropes it was hard to tear Zagloba away, he clung to it as if a brother, or his father, lay dead within it. At last Skshetuski and Volodiyovski succeeded in dragging him away. The prince stepped up to the coffin and took up a handful of earth; the priest began to say "Anima ejus . . . " the ropes were let down, the earth began to fall upon the coffin, being thrown down from the hands and helmets of the bystanders; soon above the remains of Pan Longinus Podbipyenta there arose a high mound, upon which the moon shed its pale, sad light.

The three friends returned from the town to the square, from whence came the incessant noise of battle. They walked in silence which none of them wished to break. Other groups discussed the dead hero and gave him unstinted praise.

"Even the funeral of Sierakovski was not more imposing than this," said an officer passing near Skshetuski.

"Well, he deserved it," answered another officer, "who else would have undertaken to get through to the king?"

"I heard that among the soldiers of Vishnyovyetski some volunteers offered their services," added a third officer, "but after such an awful example they will probably change their minds."

"The thing is impossible, a snake could hardly creep through."

"As true as I live it would be sheer madness."

The officers passed on. Silence reigned again, then suddenly Pan Michael spoke.

"Did you hear what they said, dear Yan?"

"I did," answered Skshetuski, "it is my turn to-day."

"Yan," said Pan Michael, earnestly, "you have known me for a long time and know that danger does not frighten me. But danger is one thing and suicide quite another!"

"And you say this, Michael?"

"I do, for I am your friend."

"And I am your friend also—give me your word of honor that you will not go as a third if I should fall."

"No, I cannot do that," exclaimed Pan Volodiyovski.

"See then, Michael! how can you ask something of me that you would not do yourself? God's will be done!"

"Then let me go with you."

"The prince has prohibited that, not I. You are a soldier and therefore must obey."

Pan Michael was silenced, for in fact he was above everything a soldier. He twisted his moustaches excitedly. Finally he said "the night is very bright, don't go to-night."

"I wish that it was darker," answered Skshetuski, "but delay cannot be thought of. As you see, the weather has become clear and is liable to remain so. We are in the direst need of powder and provisions. The soldiers are digging in the square for roots, the gums of some of them are already rotting from the rubbish they are eating. I go to-night, at once, I have already bidden farewell to the prince."

"You are a desperate man, I see."

Skshetuski smiled sadly, "enough of this, Pan Michael, I pray. I am not indeed swimming in delight, but I shall not seek death voluntarily, for that is a sin. Anyway it is not a question of dying, but of getting to the king and saving the camp."

A violent desire suddenly seized Volodiyovski to tell Skshetuski all about the princess; he had already opened his lips when he thought: "The news would turn his head and he would fall an easier prey to the enemy." He therefore bit his tongue and checked himself and said instead, "which way are you going to choose?"

"I told the prince that I should go over the pond and then along the river until I got beyond the enemy's camp. The prince thought also that this was the best way."

"I see that there is nothing else to be done," Pan Michael replied. "We can only die once and it is more honorable to die on the battle-field than in bed. God guide you! God guide you, Yani, if we do not meet again in this world we shall meet above and I shall always keep my friendship for you."

"So shall I mine for you, may God reward you for all your good deeds. And listen, Michael; if I perish they will hardly exhibit me as they did Longin, for they received too severe a lesson, but they will be sure to make it known, and in that

case let old Zatvilikhovski go to Khmyelnitski for my body, for I would not have it dragged by dogs about the enemy's camp."

"Rest assured of that," answered Pan Michael.

Zagloba who at first had not listened attentively to the conversation, now realized what is was about, but he did not have the strength to dissuade Skshetuski from the hazardous enterprise, he only groaned in sorrow:

"Yesterday one, to-day another, my God! my God! . . . "

"Trust in God!" said Volodiyovski.

"Yani . . . " began Zagloba.

But he could say nothing further. He merely leaned his hoary, careworn head upon the breast of the knight and clung to him like a helpless child.

An hour later Skshetuski entered the water of the western pond.

The night was very bright and the middle of the lake gleamed like a silver shield. Skshetuski was soon lost to sight owing to a dense growth of bullrushes and reeds upon the shore; further in, where the reeds were scarcer, there was a luxuriant growth of pond-lilies and other water-plants. This mixture of wide and narrow leaves, slimy stalks, and snake-like stems, winding themselves about Skshetuski's legs and body to the waist, made it exceedingly difficult for him to advance, but nevertheless it concealed him from the sentries. To swim across the pond's bright centre could not be thought of, for any dark object would have been easily seen. Skshetuski therefore determined to skirt around the shore of the pond to the swamp at the other side, through which the river flowed into the pond. Sentries of the Cossacks and Tartars were likely to be there, but on the other hand a whole forest of weeds grew there, only the edge of which had been cut down to make huts for the "blacks." It was possible to creep through this marsh even in daytime, unless some places should be too shallow. But it was a dreadful way. Beneath the stagnant water not more than a yard from the shore, the mud was deep, and with every step that Skshetuski took, bubbles rose to the surface of the water, the noisé of which could be distinctly heard in the stillness; besides, in spite of the slowness of his movements ripples formed about him and spread to the open water where the moonlight was reflected. Had it been raining Skshetuski could have swam straight across the pond and reached

the swamp within half an hour at the utmost, but there was not a cloud in the sky. Broad streams of greenish light fell upon the pond transforming the leaves of the water-plants into shields of silver, and the tufts of reeds to silvery spears. No breeze was stirring. Fortunately the gurgling of the bubbles was drowned by the uproar of the guns. Skshetuski, observing this, moved forward only when the discharges on the ramparts and in the trenches were at their liveliest. But this calm, clear night had another difficulty in store; swarms of mosquitoes rose from the reeds, formed a cloud about his head, lighting on his face, and eyes, stinging him, buzzing about him, and humming their melancholy vespers. Skshetuski was not unaware of the difficulties of his way when he selected this road, but he had not foreseen all of them. He did not foresee its terrors. Any depth of water, however familiar, has at night something mysterious and terrifying about it and invites the unwelcome question: "What is concealed at the bottom?" This pond of Zbaraj was positively terrible. The water in it seemed thicker than ordinary water. The stench of corpses emanated from it, which came from the hundreds of Cossacks and Tartars whose bodies were decomposing in the water. Though on both sides dead bodies had been pulled ashore, yet who could tell how many had been left hidden among the reeds and thick bulrushes? Though Skshetuski was embraced by the cool water, perpiration rolled down his forehead. What if suddenly a pair of slippery wet arms should embrace him, or a pair of greenish eyes should gaze at him from under the water-plants? The long stalks of the water-lilies wound about his knees and his hair stood on end, for he thought that he felt the embrace of a drowned man who grasped him so as not to let him loose again. "Jesus Maria! Jesus Maria!" he murmured continually, pushing himself forward. From time to time he lifted his eyes heavenward and felt comforted at the sight of the moon, the stars, and the serene sky. "There is a God," he repeated to himself in an undertone, so that he could hear himself. At times he looked at the shore and then it seemed to him as if he were looking out from some cursed, infernal world full of mud, swamps, black depths, pale moonlight, ghosts, corpses and night upon God's earth. A yearning seized him to flee at once from that network of reeds to the shore.

But he pushed on further and further along the shore

and was already so far away from the camp, that upon God's world several paces from the shore, he saw a Tartar on horseback. He stopped and looked at him observingly and, judging from the way that the figure nodded with a uniform motion towards the neck of the horse, he presumed that he was asleep. It was a strange sight, the Tartar nodding continually as if silently bowing to Skshetuski, who kept his eyes glued upon him. There was something awful in this, but Skshetuski breathed more freely, for in the presence of this manifest danger, imaginary ones that were a hundred times harder to bear, disappeared. The world of ghosts vanished, the knight at once regained his sang froid; and such thoughts as these crowded into his head: "Is he asleep or not, shall I go on or shall I wait?"

Finally he went on, making his way even more carefully than at the beginning of his journey. He had gone half way to the swamp in the river, when the first breath of a light wind arose. Soon the reeds were swaying and striking against one another, and giving forth a rustling sound. Skshetuski was relieved, for in spite of all precaution, in spite of the fact that sometimes he spent several minutes in advancing a single step, an involuntary movement, a stumble, or a splash might betray him. Now, aided by the loud rustling of the leaves, which swept over all the pond, he pushed ahead more boldly. Everything seemed to be beginning to stir, the rocking waves of water began to splash on the shore.

This movement was not confined to the reeds along the shore, for suddenly a dark object appeared before Skshetuski, and began to move towards him as if preparing for a spring. At the first moment Skshetuski almost cried aloud; but fear and a feeling of nausea restrained his voice, and at the same time a horrible stench almost suffocated him.

After a time when the first fancy of having his way barred by a drowned man was gone, only the feeling of nausea remained, and the knight pushed on. The rustling of the reeds contiued and grew louder. Through the waving tops Skshetuski saw a second and a third Tartar sentry. He passed these and a fourth one also.

"I must have gone round half the pond already," thought he, and he rose slightly to ascertain his position. Something struck his legs, he looked down and at his knees saw a human face.

"This is the second one," thought he. This time he was not frightened, for this second corpse lay on its back, still and motionless, and gave no suggestion of life or action.

Skshetuski made haste lest his head should turn. The reeds were getting denser and denser, this on the one hand afforded more cover, but on the other it made his progress more difficult. Another half hour, another hour passed, he pushed right on, but grew more and more fatigued; in some places the water was so shallow that it hardly came above his ankles; in other places again, he went in almost to his belt. Dragging his feet out of the bog, slow and tedious labor, fatigued him more than anything else. His forehead was covered with perspiration, and from time to time cold shivers passed from head to foot.

"What is the matter," he anxiously thought, "am I getting delirious? The swamp has not appeared yet. Suppose I do not recognize the place amid the thick reeds and pass it by?"

It was a fearful danger, for in that way he might circle around the pond all night and find himself in the morning in the same place whence he started, or fall into the hands of the Cossacks.

"I have chosen a bad way," thought he, and became dispirited. "I cannot get through the lake, I will return and to-morrow I will go the way Longin did. Till to-morrow I could rest."

But he went on, for he realized that he was tempting himself by letting his thoughts run on going back to rest. It also occurred to him that as he was going so slowly and had stopped every moment, he could not yet have reached the swamp. But thoughts of rest tempted him more and more. He fought against his thoughts and prayed at the same time. The cold chills passed through him more often; he drew his feet out of the mud with ever-increasing weaknesss. The sight of the Tartar sentries had stirred him, but he felt that his mind was growing numb as well as his body and that the flush of fever was coming upon him.

Another half-hour passed, but the swamp was not yet in sight.

But more often now he stumbled against the corpses of drowned men. Night, dread, the rustling of the reeds, labor, and sleeplessness, confuse his senses. He began to have visions. He sees as from afar, Helena in Kudak, and he with Jendzian is sailing down the stream of the Dnieper. The

reeds rustle, he hears the song. "Do you hear the thunderstorms and tempest yonder." . . . The priest Mukhovietski is waiting in his stole, and see, Kryshtof Grodzitski takes the place of the father. . . . The girl is looking day after day down from the walls upon the river. Suddenly she claps her hands and exclaims "He is coming! he is coming!"

"My Lord," says Jendzian, pulling him by the coat sleeve, "the lady is here . . . "

Skshetuski awakens, the tangled reeds stop him. The vision disappears, consciousness returns. Now he does not feel such weariness any longer, for the fever gives him strength.

"Oh, is not this the swamp yet!"

But around him were the same reeds as if he had not advanced at all. Near the river there must be open water, this consequently cannot be the swamp.

The knight goes on, but his thoughts obstinately return to the beautiful vision. Skshetuski resisted in vain, in vain begins to pray "O Blessed Virgin," in vain struggles to regain full consciousness. Again he beholds the Dnieper, the boats, Kudak, Sich—but now the vision is more confused, there are a number of persons. Besides Helena are the prince and Khmyelnitski, Longin, Zagloba, Bohun, Volodiyovski, all in festival attire for his wedding. But where is the wedding? They are in some strange place, it is not Lubni, nor Rozloga, nor Sich, nor Kudak. . . . water is all about in which corpses are floating. . . .

Skshetuski awakens a second time, or rather he is aroused by a noise coming from the direction in which he desires to go. He stops therefore and listens.

The noise is coming nearer, rustling and splashing can be heard; it is a boat.

Now it is clearly visible through the reeds. Two Cossacks are sitting in it. One of them is rowing. The other holds in his hand a long pole which gleams like silver in the distance, and with it he pushes the water-plants aside.

Skshetuski sank into the water up to his neck, so that only his head stuck out above the rushes, and watched. "Is it an ordinary patrol, or are they upon my track?" wondered he. But soon he concluded by the quiet, careless movements of the Cossacks, that it must be an ordinary patrol, there must be more than one boat on the pond, and if the Cossacks

were on his track doubtless several boats would have been together and a crowd of men besides.

Meantime the boat passed by. The rustling of the reeds had drowned their words, but Skshetuski distinguished this fragment of their conversation:

"The devil take them for ordering us to guard this foul water."

The boat disappeared in the thicket of reeds. But the Cossack in the front of the boat struck with regular strokes at the water-plants as if he wished to frighten the fish.

Skshetuski pushed on. After awhile he saw another Tartar picket close to the bank. The moonlight fell upon the face of the Nogai which resembled a dog's snout, but Skshetuski feared these pickets less than the loss of consciousness. He therefore exerted all his will power in order to call to mind clearly where he was and where he was going to. But the struggle only increased his fatigue, and soon he noticed that everything appeared double and threefold, and that at moments the lake seemed to him to be a camp and the bunches of reeds, tents. Then he wished to call Volodiyovski to go with him, but he had sufficient consciousness to restrain himself.

"Don't call, don't call," he repeated to himself incessantly, "that would mean ruin."

But the struggle with himself grew harder and harder. He had left Zbaraj weak with hunger and loss of sleep, from which soldiers there were already dying. This nocturnal wandering, the cold bath, the stench of corpses, the roaming about in the mud and the tearing apart of the roots of the water-plants had greatly weakened him. Added to this was the excitement, the fear, and the pain of mosquito-bites that had covered his face with blood. He felt that unless he soon reached the swamp, he would have to go ashore let come what would, or he would collapse among the reeds and drown.

The swamp and the mouth of the river seemed to him a harbor of salvation, though new difficulties and dangers were in store there for him.

He fought against the fever and proceeded, diregarding caution more and more. In the heat of the fever Skshetuski heard human voices, conversation, as if the pond were talking about him. "Would he reach the swamp or not, would he work himself through or not?" The mosquitoes about him, with their thin voices, hummed a more melan-

choly tune every moment, the water was getting deeper, now it reached his belt, now his breast. He thought if he should have to swim, he would get tangled in this muddle of plants, and drown. Again an irresistible and unconquerable desire to call Pan Michael seized him. He already had put his hands to his mouth to cry:

"Michael! Michael!"

But fortunately a merciful reed struck him in the face with its wet brush. He regained his senses and saw before him, somewhat to the right, a feeble glimmer. He kept the light steadily in view and advanced towards it for some time.

Suddenly he stopped. He saw a sheet of clear water before him. He breathed more freely. It was the river with a swamp along either bank.

"Now I shall stop circling along the shore and enter that wedge."

On either side of the wedge a narrow fringe of reeds extended. The knight proceeded along the one which he had reached, and soon realized that he was upon the right track. He looked about. The pond was already behind him, he passed along by the narrow strip of water which could be nothing else but the river. The water here was colder too. After awhile a dreadful weariness oppressed him. His knees shook beneath him and before his eyes the black cloud hovered. "I can stand it no longer," thought he, "I must go ashore and lie down. I can go no further, I must rest."

He fell upon his knees, his hands grasped a dry tuft covered with moss, like a little island among the rushes.

He sat down upon it and began to wipe his bleeding face with his hands and to draw deep breaths.

After a time the smell of smoke came to his nostrils, and when he looked towards the shore, he saw about a hundred paces away, a fire, and around it a small group of men. He was exactly in line with the fire, and when the wind bent the reeds apart he could see everything plainly. At the first glance he recognized Tartar herders, who were sitting about the fire engaged in eating. A ravenous hunger seized him, the past morning he had eaten a bite of horse-meat, scarce enough to have satisfied a wolf's cub, two months old; since then he had eaten nothing. He began to tear up the stalks of the water-lilies about him and to suck them greedily;

thereby he allayed his hunger and quenched the thirst that was tormenting him. At the same time he did not take his eyes from the fire which was growing paler and fainter. The people round it became enveloped in a fog and seemed to be fading away.

"Oh, sleep is overcoming me, I shall sleep on this island throughout the night."

Suddenly a commotion arose around the fire. The herders rose up. Then a shout "Horse! Horse!" struck Skshetuski's ears. A short neigh was the response. The fire smouldered away and died. After a time the knight heard a whistling and the dull thump of horses' hoofs from the wet meadow.

Skshetuski could not understand why the herders had scattered. Then he observed that the reeds and the leaves of the lilies were growing paler, and the water took on a different glimmer than that of moonlight, and that the air was veiled with a light fog.

He looked around: it was dawning.

He had spent the whole night in skirting the pond ere he reached the swamp and the river. He was barely beyond the beginning of the journey. Now he must go along the river and attempt to pass the camp during the day. The air was pentrated more and more with the light of dawn, In the east the horizon was soon a pale green color.

Skshetuski slipped from the island into the swamp again, and pushing towards the bank he bent the reeds apart and looked out.

At a distance of about five hundred paces was a Tartar patrol. Otherwise the meadow was empty, only the dying fire spluttered on a dry spot near. The knight made up his mind to creep to it through the tall grass, which in places was interspersed with rushes. Having reached the fire he looked greedily for some remains of food. He found indeed some freshly-picked mutton-bones with bits of tendon and fat, besides some roasted turnips left in the ashes. He fell upon the food with the greediness of a wild beast until he noticed that the patrols on the road that he had passed were coming towards him across the meadow on their way to the camp.

He then retreated and in a few minutes disappeared among the reeds. He found his island again and lay down on it noiselessly. The patrol passed by. Skshetuski began to gnaw some bones again which he had brought along with him, and

soon they cracked beneath his strong jaws as if between the teeth of a wolf. He gnawed off the tendons and fat, sucked out the marrow, and partly allayed his hunger. Such a breakfast he had not had for a long time in Zbaraj.

Now he felt invigorated. The food as well as the dawning day, braced him. It grew brighter and brighter. The eastern horizon was transformed from a greenish into a rose-red and golden color. Although the rawness of the morning chilled the knight, he found consolation in the thought that the sun would soon warm his tired body. He carefully examined his surroundings. The island was fairly large, somewhat short, but broad enough to allow two men to lie upon it comfortably, the reeds surrounded it like a wall upon all sides, thus concealing it from sight. "They cannot find me here," thought Skshetuski, "unless they fish in the reeds. But there are now no fishes for they have all died on account of decomposition. Here I will rest and think what is best to be done."

He turned over in his mind whether he should continue to go on by the river or not. At length he determined to go on if the wind should rise and cause the reeds to sway; otherwise his movements and the noise would betray him, especially as he probably would have to pass close to the camp.

"I thank Thee, God, that I am still alive," he whispered.

He gazed up at the sky and then his thoughts flew over to the Polish camp. He could see the castle plainly at the moment it was gilded by the first rays of the rising sun. Perhaps some one was looking from the tower at the pond and at the reeds through a field-glass. Pan Michael, Zagloba, and Vododiyovski would no doubt watch all day long from the ramparts to see if he were hanging from some of the war-towers.

"They will not see me," thought Skshetuski, and his breast swelled with a pleasant feeling of safety. "They will not see me," he repeated several times. "I have only gone a small part of the way, but it was no trifle. God will aid me further."

Now he looked with the eyes of imagination beyond the camp, beyond the forest, behind which was the royal army, the general militia of the country, hussars, infantry, foreign regiments. The earth groaned beneath the burden of men, horses, and cannon, and in the midst of this crowd of people

was the king himself. . . . Then he saw a great battle, broken camps,—the prince with all his cavalry rushing over heaps of corpses, the salutations of the armies. . . .

His aching and swollen eyes closed upon the dazzling light; his head sank beneath the weight of thoughts; a pleasant weakness overcame him; he stretched himself at full length and fell fast asleep.

The reeds rustled. The sun rose high in the sky and warmed with kindly rays the knight and dried his clothes. He lay motionless and sound asleep. Had anyone seen him thus, lying on the island, with bloody, upturned face, he would surely have thought that this was a corpse that had been washed ashore. Hours went by but he still slept. The sun reached its zenith and began to descend in the vault of heaven, but he still slept. The piercing crys of horses biting each other and the loud shouts of the herders as they lashed the stallions, awoke him.

He rubbed his eyes, looked about, and tried to remember where he was. He looked up in the sky, still red with the last rays of the setting sun; stars were twinkling. He had slept through the whole day.

Skshetuski however, felt neither rested nor refreshed; on the contrary all his limbs were aching. But he thought that new toil would brace his body, and putting his feet into the water he continued his journey.

He now proceeded in clear water skirting the reeds, lest he should by the noise of his steps excite the attention of the herders who were guarding the banks. The last gleam had died away and it was quite dark, for the moon had not yet risen from behind the woods. The water was so deep that Skshetuski in some places found himself over his head and was obliged to swim. This was difficult on account of his clothes and because he had to swim against the current. But not the keenest Tartar eye could have seen the head which was moving along the dark wall of reeds. He therefore pushed forward rather boldly, sometimes swimming, but mostly wading in water up to his belt or beneath his arms, until he finally reached a spot where his eyes beheld thousands and thousands of lights on either side of the river.

"Those are the camps," thought he, "now God help me."

And he listened.

A murmur of many voices reached his ears. Those indeed were the camps. On the left bank of the river, following

its bend, lay the Cossack camp with its thousands of tents and wagons—on the right side the Tartar camp—both resounding with noise and tumult, full of the babel of human voices, wild rolling of drums and shrill whistling of fifes, bellowing of cattle, neighing of horses, and shouts. The river divided them and kept them from quarreling and fighting with each other, for the Tartars could never exist in peace beside the Cossacks. The river was widest here, perhaps widened purposely. Judging by the fires the tents and carts were on one side and reed-huts upon the other, but a few steps from the river. Close to the water, no doubt, pickets were stationed.

The reeds and bulrushes became thinner; evidently the banks along the two camps were bare. Skshetuski sneaked on for some tens of steps and then stopped. The shadow of a mighty force seemed to fall upon him from those multitudes.

He felt at the moment as if the entire vigilance, the entire wrath of these thousands of human beings were concentrated upon him, and against them he felt powerless and defenceless. He was all alone.

"No one can ever pass here," thought he.

But he crept on still, for a painful, irresistible curiosity dragged him forward. He wished to have a nearer view of this terrible force.

Suddenly he stopped. The thicket of reeds came to an end, as if it had been mowed down with knives. Perhaps the reeds had been cut for the building of huts. Further on the clear water was red from the fires reflected in it.

Two great bright fires were burning close to the banks. By one was a Tartar on horseback, by the other a Cossack with a long lance in his hand. They turned their faces toward each other and the water. In the distance several such pickets were to be seen.

The flames cast their light on the river, and formed what looked like a bridge of fire. Along the banks were two rows of small boats used by the guard on the lake.

" 'Tis impossible," murmured Skshetuski.

Sudden despair seized him. He could go neither forward nor backward. A day and a night had passed since he had been roaming through the mud and reeds. And he breathed the foul air and waded the water of the lake only to realize here, after having reached the camps of the enemy through which he desired to pass, that it was impossible?

But to return was also impossible. The knight knew that he might find strength enough to drag himself forward, but not to go backward. A dull rage mingled with his despair. At first it urged him to step out of the water, choke the guard, and then throw himself among the crowd and die.

The breeze with a mysterious whisper began to rustle again the reeds, bringing with it sounds of the bells of Zbaraj. Skshetuski began to pray fervently. He beat his breast and with all the strength and desperate faith of a drowning man he besought Heaven to aid him. He prayed, while from the two camps arose ominous noises, as if in response to his prayer. Black figures flitted about in the glare of the fire, looking like a herd of devils in hell. The pickets stood motionless. The river flowed on with blood-tinted waves.

"The fires will burn out when the night comes on," said Skshetuski to himself, and waited.

An hour passed, and another. The noise decreased. The fires began to smoulder, except the two watch-fires which flared up brighter and brighter. The pickets were relieved; it was evident that guard would be kept until morning.

It came to Skshetuski's mind that perhaps he might slip through more easily in the day-time, but he abandoned the thought at once. In the day-time they drew water, brought their cattle down to drink and bathed; the river would be full of people. Suddenly Skshetuski glanced at the boats. On either side were about ten boats in a row and on the side of the Tartar camp the rushes reached to the first one. Skshetuski sank in the water to his neck and slowly moved towards the boats, at the same time fixing his eyes on the Tartar picket. At the end of half an hour he was close to the first boat. His plan was simple. The sterns of the boats which were raised above the water, formed a sort of arch, beneath which a man's head might pass with ease. When all the boats lay closely side by side, the Tartar picket could not see a head pushing along under them. There was more danger from the Cossack picket, but he might not see the head either, for in spite of the fire opposite the boats, it was dark beneath them. There was indeed no other way.

Skshetuski hesitated no longer and was soon beneath the sterns of the boats. He crept, or rather dragged himself along, for the water was very shallow. He was so near the Tartar standing on the bank, that he could hear the breathing

of his horse. For a moment he stopped and listened. Fortunately the boats lay closely side by side. Now he fixed his eyes upon the Cossack picket whom he could see quite plainly. He was looking at the Tartar camp. The knight had passed about fifteen boats when he suddenly heard steps on the shore and the voices of men. He ducked at once and listened. During his journeys in the Crimea he had learned the Tartar language. A cold shiver ran through his body as he heard the words of command:

"Embark, and put off."

Although in the water the knight felt fever burning him; if the Tartars should take the boat beneath which he was concealed he would be lost; should they step into the one in front of him, he was lost also, for this would leave an open lighted space.

Every second seeemed an hour to him. Steps sounded on the planks—the Tartars took the fifth boat right behind him and put out, rowing in the direction of the pond. This proceeding attracted the attention of the Cossack picket to the boats. Skshetuski lay motionless for a good half-hour. Not until the sentry was relieved did he begin to crawl ahead again.

In this way he reached the end of the row of boats. Beyond the last one the rushes grew again and a little further on reeds. When he reached shelter the knight fell on his knees, breathless and covered with sweat, and thanked God with all his heart.

He went onward more boldly, taking advantage of every faint breeze that stirred the reeds. From time to time he looked backward. The watchfires appeared more and more distant; they twinkled faintly and began to fade away. The lines of reeds and rushes were getting denser and darker, for the banks were more swampy. The pickets could not be posted so closely to each other now, the noise of the camps grew fainter. Supernatural strength seemed to flow into the limbs of the knight. He forced his way through the reeds, over islands, sinking in the mud, falling into deep water, swimming and getting out again. He did not dare to go on shore yet, but he almost felt that he was saved. He did not know how long he thus waded on, but when he again looked back the watchfires appeared like little points of light in the distance; a few hundred steps more and they disappeared altogether. The moon went down; all about was

still. Then arose a stronger, mightier rustling than that of the reeds. Skshetuski almost cried aloud from joy—on both banks of the river he saw the wood before him.

He made for the bank and emerged from the reeds. He breathed the fragrance of pine. The pine-forest joined the reeds and rushes, and here and there gleamed the silvery leaves of ferns in the black depths.

The knight fell upon his knees for the second time and kissed the earth as he prayed.

He was saved.

Then he plunged into the darkness of the forest, asking himself whither he should go? Whither would these forests lead him? Where was the king and the army?

The journey was not over yet, nor was it now safe nor easy. But when he considered that he had emerged from Zbaraj, that he had stolen through pickets, swamps, mud, camps, and nearly a half million of enemies—then it seemed to him that all danger was over and that this forest was a clear road leading directly to His Majesty the king.

And so this hungry and shivering wreck, smeared with his own blood and with red and black mud, walked on in gladness and with hope in his heart that he would soon return to Zbaraj in different circumstances and in greater power.

"You shall not remain much longer a prey to hopelessness and starvation," said he, thinking about his friends in Zbaraj, "for I will bring the king."

His heroic heart was rejoiced at the near rescue of the prince, the commanders, Volodiyovski, Zagloba, and all the heroes enclosed within the ramparts of Zbaraj. The depth of the forest received him and embraced him with sheltering darkness.

CHAPTER VII.

In the reception room of the court at Toporov there sat three gentlemen in secret conference. It was evening; several wax-candles stood on the table, which was covered with maps of the surrounding country. There also lay upon the table a tall hat with a black feather; a field glass, a sword with the hilt set with pearls, a lace handkerchief embroidered with a crown, and a pair of deerskin gloves. At the table in a high armchair sat a man rather small and slender, but strongly built, and about forty years of age. His face was swarthy and sallow and bore a weary expression; his eyes were black and so was his Swedish wig, the long locks of which fell over his neck and shoulders; a thin, black moustache curled up at the ends, adorned his upper lip, but the under lip and beard protruded, imparting to his physiognomy a characteristic mark of lion-like courage, pride, and stubbornness. It was not a handsome face, but there was dignity in it. A sensuous expression betraying inclination to enjoyment of life was strangely blended with a certain sleepy torpor and frigidity. The eyes seemed dull, but one could easily imagine that in moments of enthusiasm, rapture, or scorn, they could flash like lightning; they at the same time betrayed both mildness and affability.

The black dress composed of a satin kaftan with a lace ruff, beneath which a gold chain glittered, increased the distinction of this remarkable figure. There was something majestic about it, despite the sorrow and care which expressed themselves in the features and attitude. This in truth was the king, Yan Kazimier Vaza, who nearly a year since had succeeded his brother Vladislav.

Seated a little behind him was Hieronom Radzieyovski the chief of Lomza, a short, thick-set, ruddy man with the face of a courtier; and opposite to him a third man who was leaning upon his elbows, attentively studying the maps before him, and from time to time raising his eyes to the king.

His countenance was less majestic, but expressed more

official dignity, than that of the king. It was a face furrowed by care and thought, cold and intelligent, with a stern look which did not mar its uncommon beauty. His eyes were blue and penetrating, his complexion delicate in spite of his age. His gorgeous Polish dress, his beard trimmed in the Swedish style, and the tuft of hair on his forehead imparted to his regular classical features, something of senatorial dignity.

This was Yerzy Ossolinski chancellor of the Crown and prince of the Roman nobility, a diplomat and orator, who was admired throughout all the courts of Europe; the famous opponent of Yeremy Vishnyovyetski. His extraordinary ability had long before attracted the attention of former rulers and had procured for him the most important offices, by virtue of which he guided the ship of state, at the present hour so near to ruin.

The chancellor was fit to be the pilot of such a ship; industrious, patient, intelligent, and farseeing, he would have directed with a steady hand any other State except the Commonwealth to a safe harbor, and could have secured domestic strength and many years of power to any other State—if he could have been the absolute minister of a monarch, for example, such as the King of France, or the King of Spain.

Educated beyond the boundaries of his own countries, following foreign models, in spite of his innate intelligence and quickness, in spite of his long experience, he could not accustom himself to the powerless rule in the Commonwealth, and all his life he did not learn not to take this circumstance into account, although this was the rock upon which all his plans and endeavors were shattered—though he now saw the ruin that was pending, and later he died with despair in his heart.

He was an ingenious theorist who, however, did not understand how to be ingenious in practice, and he fell into a maze of errors from which he could not escape. If he once hit upon an idea that promised to bear good fruit he clung to it with the stubbornness of a fanatic, not recognizing that this idea though salutary in theory, might in practice, because of actual circumstances, be followed by terrible disasters.

Wishing to strengthen the country and the government he let loose the terrible Cossack element, not forseeing that the storm would turn not only against the nobility, the mag-

nates, the great estates, the abuses and arrogance of the nobles, but also against the most vital interests of the State.

Khmyelnitski rose up in the steppes and had grown to be a giant. The defeats of Zolta Woda, Korsun, and Pilavyets fell heavily on the Commonwealth. At the outset this Khmyelnitski entered into a confederacy with the Crimean power, the enemy of the country. One blow followed another—there remained war and nothing else. The terrible element should have been crushed first of all, so as to make it of use in the future; but the chancellor, instead of doing this, occupied with his own thoughts, was still negotiating a delay and still trusting even Khmyelnitski.

The force of circumstances shattered all his theories. Every day it became clearer that the results of the chancellor's efforts were entirely different from what he had expected, till at last the days of Zbaraj had sadly confirmed all.

The chancellor was almost crushed by worry, exasperation, and general unpopularity.

He did what, in times of misfortune and adversity, all do whose self-confidence is stronger than all disaster; he looked for people whom he could hold responsible.

The entire Commonwealth was to blame, and all classes, the past, and the form of government. But he, who in fear lest a rock lying on the slope of a mountain might fall and crush everything in his way, wishes to roll it to the top without considering the strength that is at his command, will only cause the rock to roll down all the sooner. The chancellor did worse, for he called to his aid the terrible rushing torrent of the Cossacks, and had not taken into consideration that this force was bound to undermine the very ground on which the rock was resting.

While therefore he sought for people upon whom to lay the blame, all eyes were turned towards him as the cause of the war, the disasters, and misery.

But the king still believed in the judgment of the chancellor, all the more because public opinion did not spare His Majesty and accused him equally with the chancellor. So they sat, careworn and weary, at Toporov not knowing what to do, for the king had only twenty-five thousand men at his command. The conscript summons had been issued too late, and recruits therefore were gathering very slowly. As to who was the cause of this, and whether this delay was not a new blunder of the stubborn policy of the chancellor, that

secret was known only to the king and his minister; it suffices that both felt at that moment helpless against the power of Khmyelnitski.

What was more serious still was that they had no accurate information about him. In the camp of the king it was not known whether the Khan with all his forces was with Khmyelnitski, or if only Tukhay Bey with a few thousands of his hordes was accompanying the Cossacks. This was a question of life or death. With Khmyelnitski alone the king might, in case of necessity, try his fortune, though a force ten times greater was under the command of the rebel hetman. The magic of the royal name had great influence with the Cossacks; greater perhaps than with the crowds of general milita, and the rude and untrained nobility. If, however, the Khan were with the Cossacks, it was hopeless to battle against them.

Widely varying reports were floating about, but no one knew the true state of affairs. The cautious Khmyelnitski held all his forces together and did not let a single party of Cossacks or Tartars go from camp so that the king might not get information.

The rebel chieftain had a design to seal up the starving Zbaraj entirely with a part of his troops, while he with the rest of his Cossacks, and the entire Tartar forces, would surround the king unexpectedly and deliver him over to the Khan.

It was not without reason therefore that the brow of the king was clouded, for there is no greater pain to majesty than a feeling of helplessness. Yan Kazimier lay helpless in his armchair with his hand resting on the table and pointing to the maps, he said:

"These lead to nothing, nothing! I need informants."

"That is what I am longing for too," answered Ossolinski.

"Have the scouts come back?"

"They have, but they bring no news."

"Not even a captive?"

"Only peasants from the neighborhood who know nothing."

"And is Pan Pelka back? he is a famous scout."

"Your Majesty," interrupted the Chief of Lomza from behind the arm-chair, "Pan Pelka is not here, nor will he return, for he is dead."

A deep silence fell. The king gazed upon the flickering candles and drummed with his fingers on the table.

"Have you no counsel?" he asked at length.

"We must wait," said the chancellor, earnestly.

A frown wrinkled Yan Kazimier's forehead. "Wait?" he repeated, "and in Zbaraj, Vishnyovyetski and the commanders are dying of hunger."

"They can hold out for some time yet," remarked Radzieyovski.

"You had better hold your peace, chief, if you have no good plan to offer."

"I have a plan, Your Majesty."

"What?"

"Let us send sone one to Khmyelnitski as if going to negotiate; the envoy will discover if the Khan be with him, and will bring us information."

"That is not possible," said the king, "after having declared Khmyelnitski a rebel, set a price upon his head, and bestowed the baton of the Zaporojians upon Pan Zabuski, it would be beneath our dignity to enter into negotiations with Khmyelnitski."

"Then let us send an envoy to the camp," replied the chief.

The king looked inquiringly at the chancellor, who in turn looked at the king with his severe blue eyes, and after some reflection said:

"The advice would be good, but Khmyelnitski would no doubt seize the envoy; therefore it would not work."

Yan Kazimier waved his hand.

"I see," said he, slowly, "that you have no plan and now I will give you mine. I will go with the whole army to Zbaraj. Let God's will be done! There we shall find out if the Khan be present or not."

The chancellor knew the indomitable courage of the king and did not doubt that he would do what he said. Besides he knew from experience that when the king had once made up his mind to do a thing all persuasion was useless. He did not offer any opposition therefore at once; he even praised the idea, but deprecated too great haste. He explained to the king that a delay of one or two days would make no difference, and in the meantime direct news might arrive. Every day must increase the dissension and insubordination among the mob because of the constant defeats and the news of the king's proximity. The rebellion might melt before the presence of Majesty, as snow beneath sunbeams, but it required time. "The king," he went on to say, "bears a responsibility

before God and posterity of saving the whole Commonwealth; he should not expose himself to danger especially as in case of misfortune the army in Zbaraj would be hopelessly lost."

"Do what you please, but I must have an informant to-morrow."

Again silence fell. A golden, full moon shone in through the windows, but in the chamber it grew darker for the candles were flickering.

"What time is it?" asked the king.

"It is near midnight," answered Radzieyovski.

"I shall not sleep to-night. I will ride around the camp, and you come with me. Where are Ubald and Artishevski?"

"In the camp. I will go and order the horses," answered the chief.

He went towards the door. There arose a noise in the hall, a lively conversation was audible, then the sound of hurried steps; the door was opened and Tyzenhauz, the king's chamberlain, rushed in breathless.

"Your Majesty," he cried, "an officer from Zbaraj has arrived."

The king sprang up, the chancellor rose also, and both cried out, "impossible!"

"It is so, he is standing in the antechamber."

"Let him come in," exclaimed the king, clapping his hands, "let him allay our anxiety; show him in at once, do you hear?"

Tyzenhauz disappeared, and a moment later there appeared in his stead, a tall, strange figure.

"Step nearer, sir," said the king, "nearer, we are glad to see you."

The newcomer walked slowly to the table and at sight of him the king, the chancellor, and the chief of Lomza, fell back in astonishment. Before them stood a man, or rather a spectre, fearful to look upon. Tattered rags covered his emaciated body; his face was pale and stained with blood and filth; his eyes glittered feverishly, his black, tangled beard fell over his breast; the stench of corpses emanated from him, and his legs shook so that he had to lean upon the table.

The king and the two officials gazed at him with wide, staring eyes. Now the doors opened and a number of dignitaries, military and civil, entered; among them Generals Ubald and Artishevsi, Sapieha, the Lithuanian Vice-Chancellor,

the Chief of Jechyts and Pan Sandomierski. All took places behind the king and looked at the newcomer. Then the king asked:

"Who are you?"

The unfortunate man opened his mouth, attempted to speak, but the words would not come, his beard quivered and he was barely able to whisper:

"From . . . . Zbaraj."

"Give him some wine," said a voice from the crowd.

In a moment a goblet of wine was brought; the newcomer emptied it with great difficulty. Meanwhile the chancellor had thrown off his cloak and covered the stranger's shoulders with it.

"Can you speak now?" asked the king, after a time.

"I can," replied the knight, with a somewhat firmer voice.

"Who are you?"

"Yan Skshetuski, Lieutenant of Hussars." . . . .

"In whose service?"

"In the service of the Voyevoda of Russia."

A murmur spread through the chamber.

"What news do you bring with you?" asked the king, in a feverish tone.

"Distress . . . famine .... one grave."

The king covered his eyes with his hands.

"Jesus of Nazareth! Jesus of Nazareth!" he murmured.

Then he asked again:

"Can they hold out for a time yet?"

"Powder is scarce, the enemy is on the ramparts."

"Is the enemy strong?"

"Khmyelnitski . . . . and the Khan with all his hordes."

"The Khan is there?"

"He is."

Deep silence followed. Those present looked at one another, . . . anxiety was expressed on every face.

"How have you been able to hold out?" asked the chancellor, with a doubtful accent.

Then Skshetuski raised his head, as if new strength had come to him. A flash of pride glowed in his face and in a voice unexpectedly strong, he said:

"Twenty assaults repulsed, sixteen battles won in the open field, seventy-five sorties—" . . .

Silence fell again.

Then the king straightened up, shook his wig as a lion his

mane, while a flush crimsoned his sallow face and his eyes flashed.

"By God!" he exclaimed, "enough of listening to advice, of this paltering and hesitation! if the Khan be there or not, if the general militia be gathered or not, by God! I have had enough of this; to-day we shall march to Zbaraj."

"To Zbaraj, to Zbaraj!" shouted a number of powerful voices.

The face of the newcomer brightened like the dawn.

"Gracious King and Ruler," he said, "we will live and die with you." . . .

These words touched the noble heart of the king, and regardless of the knight's repugnant appearance, he pressed his head with his hands and said:

"I prefer you to others, dressed in satin. By the Most Holy Mother, men who have done less have been rewarded with governorships. But what you have done shall not pass unrewarded. Do not thank me, I am your debtor."

Then the others cried in chorus:

"There has been no greater knight, this one is the greatest of those in Zbaraj. He has achieved immortal glory."

"How did you penetrate the Cossacks and Tartars?"

"I hid in swamps . . . crept through reeds . . . wandered through woods, . . . roamed about, . . . was without food."

"Give him food," exclaimed the king.

"Food," repeated the others, "give him clothes also."

"To-morrow you shall have a horse and clothing," said the king, "you shall not want for anything."

All, following the king's example, rivalled one another in bestowing praises. Again they put questions to him which he answered with difficulty, for increasing weakness overcame him, and he was scarce conscious. Food and drink was brought to him. Then there entered the priest Tsietsishovski, the royal chaplain.

The dignitaries stepped aside to make room for him, for he was a very learned man and much respected. His word had almost as much weight with the king as the chancellor's, and it often happened that he openly spoke from the pulpit about matters that few hinted at even in the Diet. He was immediately surrounded and they began to tell him that an officer had arrived from Zbaraj; that the prince, in spite of famine and suffering, was still holding out against the Khan, who together with Khmyelnitski was laying siege to Zbaraj;

that the latter had not lost during the past year so many men as had fallen before Zbaraj; and finally that the king intended to hasten to the prince's aid, even though he and his army should perish.

The priest listened attentively, moving his lips and gazing constantly upon the emaciated knight who was refreshing himself, the king having commanded him not to regard his presence, and even waiting on him himself, and from time to time pledging him in a little silver goblet.

"And what is the name of this officer," asked the priest.

"Skshetuski."

"Yan Skshetuski?"

"Yes, Father."

"Lieutenant with the Voyevoda of Russia?"

"So it is!"

The priest raised his wrinkled face, murmured a prayer, and said:

"Let us praise the name of the Lord, for through hidden paths he leads man to bliss and peace. Amen. I know this officer."

Skshetuski heard these words and involuntarily his eyes sought the face of the priest, but his face, form, and voice seemed entirely strange to him.

"So you alone undertook to get through the enemy's camp?" asked the priest.

"A worthy comrade made the attempt before me, but he fell," answered Skshetuski.

"So much greater is your service. I see by your appearance that it must have been a terrible undertaking. God beheld your sacrifice, your virtue, your youth, and was with you."

Then the priest turned to Yan Kazimier.

"Gracious King," said he, "have you then irrevocably made up your mind to hasten to the rescue of the Voyevoda of Russia?"

"To your prayers, Father," replied the king, "I commend the country, the army, and myself, for I know that it is a terrible undertaking; but I cannot allow the prince to perish before my eyes with such knights as our comrade here, on those unfortunate ramparts."

"God will give us victory," exclaimed several voices.

The priest raised his hands and a deep silence fell.

"I bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

"Amen!" said the king.

"Amen!" repeated all.

A peaceful expression settled upon the sorrowing countenance of Yan Kazimier, but in his eyes there shone an unusual light. A conversation in low tones was carried on by those present concerning the intended expedition, for many doubted yet if the king could really march out at once; he, however, took his sword from the table, and made a sign to Tyzenhauz to gird it on him.

"When does Your Majesty intend to begin the march?" inquired the chancellor.

"God has given us a pleasant night," answered the king, "the horses will not get overheated." Then turning to the dignitaries, he added, "let the signal to mount be given."

The commander of the camp immediately disappeared. Chancellor Ossolinski remarked in a low tone that all were not ready, and that the wagons could not leave before morning. But the king replied:

"Let him remain behind who prefers the wagons to his country and his king."

The room became empty. All hurried to their regiments to get them in order and join the march. Only the king, the chancellor, the priest, Skshetuski, and Tyzenhauz remained.

"Gracious Lord," said the priest, "from this officer you know now what you wish to learn, he must have rest now, for he can hardly stand on his feet. Permit me, Your Majesty, to take him to my quarters over night?"

"Very well, Father," replied the king, "your request is granted. Let Tyzenhauz and some one else escort him, for he could hardly get there alone. Go, go, dear officer, nobody here deserves rest so much as you. And bear in mind that I am your debtor. I would rather forget myself, than forget you."

Tyzenhauz took Skshetuski by the arm and led him out. In the antechamber they met the Chief of Jechyts, who supported the tottering knight on the other side. The priest went ahead and before him a servant with a lantern. But the night was bright, calm, and warm. The golden moon sailed like a boat above Toporov. A confusion of voices arose from the square, and creaking of wagons and noise of trumpets sounding the reveille. At a distance, before the church, illumined by the light of the moon, numbers of soldiers, infantry, and cavalry, could be seen. Horses were neighing in

the village. The creaking of wagons mingled with the rattle of chains, and the noise of moving cannon;—the din increased every moment.

"They are marching out already," said the priest.

"To Zbaraj, ... to the rescue," . . . . whispered Skshetuski. Was it joy, or the hardships that he had gone through, or both together, that made him so weak that Tyzenhauz and the Chief of Jetchyts had almost to carry him?

On their way to the priest's house, they passed through the soldiers assembled before the church. These were the cavalry of Sapieha and the infantry of Artsishevski. They were not yet in ranks and stood about without order, massed in places and obstructing the passage.

"Make way, make way," cried the priest.

"Who passes here?"

"An officer from Zbaraj." . . . .

"Bow to him! Bow to him!" exclaimed many voices.

And they immediately made way, but others crowded round to look upon the hero. They gazed in astonishment upon that emaciated, disfigured face, bathed in the moon's light and whispered to each other: "From Zbaraj . . . from Zbaraj!" . . .

With difficulty they arrived at last at the priest's house. There, after he had been bathed and washed from the blood and filth, he was placed in the bed of the priest, who went immediately to join the expedition.

Though Skshetuski was scarcely conscious he could not sleep at once because of the fever; he did not know where he was or what had happened. He heard only a humming noise, the clatter of hoofs, the rumble of wagons, the thundering tread of infantry, shouts, and sounds of trumpets; all this was mingled in his ears with one great roar. "The army is departing," he murmured to himself repeatedly.

Meanwhile the roar gradually grew fainter and died away, till at last deep silence fell upon Toporov.

Now it seemed to Skshetuski as if he were sinking with his bed deeper and deeper into a bottomless abyss.

CHAPTER VIII.

Skshetuski slept for several days, and even when he awoke, the fever had not left him, and he was delirious for a long time; he talked of Zbaraj, the prince, the chief of Krasnostavsk; he conversed with Pan Michael and Zagloba, he shouted to Longin, "not that way;" but the name of the princess was not mentioned by him. It was clear that the great power with which he had enclosed her memory in his innermost heart, did not forsake him even in his state of weakness and sickness. He seemed to see the chubby face of Jendzian bending over him, just as he saw it when the prince, after the battle of Konstantinov, had sent him with some squadrons to Zaslav to disperse the crowds of rebels, and Jendzian had appeared to him unexpectedly in his quarters. The sight of this face confused his mind for he felt as if time had stood still and that nothing had changed since that period. He thought he was again on the Khomora and sleeping in the hut, then he thought that he awoke and was marching with the troops to Tarnopol . . . . Kshyvonos, beaten at Konstantinov and flying to Khmyelnitski. Jendzian had come from Hushch and was sitting by him. . . . Skshetuski wishes to speak to him, to order the lad to saddle the horses, but he cannot. . . . . Again he thinks that he is not on the Khomora, that since then Bar has been taken,—at this he grinds his teeth in pain, and his unhappy thoughts are lost in the void that follows. He knows nothing, sees nothing, then out of the chaos there arises Zbaraj: . . . the siege. . . . He is not then on the Khomora. Yet Jendzian is by him, bending over him. Through an opening in the window shutter there came a ray of daylight, lighting the face of the lad, full of anxiety and sympathy.

"Jendzian!" exclaimed Skshetuski, suddenly.

"Oh, my master, do you at last recognize me?" cried the lad, and fell upon his knees. "I thought that my master would never wake any more." . . .

A period of silence followed, naught could be heard save the sobbing of the lad, who embraced the feet of his master.

"Where am I?" asked Skshetuski.

"In Toporov . . . . my master came from Zbaraj to the king." . . .

"God be praised, God be praised!"

"And where is the king?"

"He has gone with the army to rescue the prince."

Again silence followed. Tears of joy ran down Jendzian's face, and after a time he began to repeat:

"God be praised that I look upon your face again." . . .

Then he arose and opened the window and the shutters. The brisk morning air entered the chamber and with it the bright light of day. With the light Skshetuski fully regained his senses. . . .

Jendzian sat down at the foot of the bed.

"Then I came from Zbaraj?" asked the knight.

"You did, my master. Nobody else could have done what you have done, and it was you that incited the king to go to the rescue."

"Pan Podbipyenta attempted to get through before me, but he perished." . . . .

"Oh! for God's sake! Pan Podbipyenta dead! such a generous and virtuous gentleman! It has nearly taken my breath away. How did they vanquish such a giant?"

"They shot him to death with arrows."

"And Pan Volodiyovski, and Pan Zagloba?"

"They were well when I came away."

"Thanks be to God! they are my master's dear friends . . . . but the priest has forbidden me to talk." . . .

Jendzian grew dumb and seemed to be turning over something in his mind. His chubby face gave evidence that he was lost in reflection. After a time he said:

"My master!"

"What is it?"

"I wonder what will be done with the fortune of Pan Podbipyenta? He is said to have owned villages and boundless wealth. Did he leave anything to his friends? for I hear that he had no relatives."

Skshetuski did not answer; Jendzian noticed that the question did not please his master, and he began again as follows:

"God be praised that Pan Zagloba and Pan Volodiyovski are well. I feared that they had fallen into the hands of the Tartars . . . . we went through a lot of suffering together . . . . but the priest has forbidden me to talk. . . . Oh, my

master, I thought that I should never see them again, for the Tartar horde pressed so closely upon us that we knew not what to do."

"Then you were with Pan Volodiyovski and Zagloba? They did not say anything to me about it."

"For they did not know whether I was saved or not."

"Then where did the horde press so closely upon you?"

"Beyond Ploskir, on the way to Zbaraj. We had made our way far beyond Yampol, my master, . . . but the priest has forbidden me to talk."

Silence intervened again.

"God reward you for your good will and trouble," said Skshetuski, "for I know why you went there; I was there before you . . . . but in vain."

"Oh, my master, if it were not for the priest. . . . . But this is what he said: 'I must go with the king to Zbaraj and you (he said) look after the noble, but tell him nothing lest his soul should leave his body.'"

Skshetuski had so long since given up all hope, that these words of Jendzian's did not excite him in any way. . . . He lay motionless for awhile and then he asked:

"How did you come to be here with the priest and the army?"

"The wife of the castellan of Sandomir, Pani Vitovska, sent me from Zamost to inform the castellan that she would join him at Toporov. . . . She is a brave woman, sir, and desires above all to be with the army so as not to be separated from the Castellan. Thus I arrived here a day before my master; by this time she ought to be here also; . . . but this will be useless if the castellan has gone away with the king."

"I can't understand how you could be in Zamost if you were beyond Yampol with Volodiyovski and Zagloba. Why did you not come with them to Zbaraj?"

"You see, my master, when the horde pressed so closely upon us, there was no other way; they were obliged to check the horde while I fled on and did not draw rein until I reached Zamost."

"It is lucky that they did not perish," said Skshetuski, "for I thought that you were a better man. Was it right to leave them in such a strait?"

"I, my master, had we been only three, I would surely not have left them, ... my heart cuts me . . . . but there were four of us; . . they threw themselves against the horde

and ordered me . . . . to escape . . . . if I were sure that joy that would not kill you . . . . for we found beyond Yampol . . . . but the priest . . . . "

Skshetuski stared at the lad and rubbed his eyes as one who awakens from sleep; suddenly he felt as if something had broken within him, he grew pale as a corpse, sat up in bed and cried in a voice of thunder:

"Sir, oh sir," exclaimed the lad, frightened by the change that had taken place in the face of the knight.

"Who was with you?" cried Skshetuski, seizing the boy by the shoulder, shaking him, holding him with a clutch like iron, while he himself shook as if taken with a chill.

"I will tell," cried Jendzian, "let the priest do what he pleases. The lady was with us and she is now with Pani Vitovska."

Skshetuski grew rigid, he closed his eyes and fell back upon the pillows.

"Help!" cried Jendzian, "my master has breathed his last. Help! what have I done! Oh, that I had kept my mouth shut! My God! my most dear master, speak but one word . . . .for God's sake! the priest was right to forbid. My master! Oh, ... my master!" . . . .

"It's nothing," said Skshetuski, "where is she?"

"Praise be to God that you have regained your senses . . . . my master. It is better that I speak no more. She is with the wife of the Castellan of Sandomierz, you will see them soon . . . . any moment. . . . . Thanks be to God! . . . . only do not die, sir; they must be here. We fled to Zamost, there the Priest gave her to Pani Vitovska for property.... for there are insubordinate men in the army. Bohun honored her; . . . . I had much trouble on the way . . . . but I told the soldiers 'that she was a relative of Prince Yeremy,' and they respected her as such. . . . I also had to spend considerable money on the way." . . . .

Skshetuski lay motionless again, but his open eyes were directed towards the ceiling, his face was very serious and one could see that he was praying. When he had finished he rose and said:

"Give me my clothes and have the horse ready."

"Where do you intend to go?"

"Give me my clothes, quickly."

"If my master only knew, there are plenty of clothes for him, for the king ordered some before he went away, and

other gentlemen also. And there are three fine horses in the stable. . . . if I only had one like them. . . . but it were better that my master should lay down and rest for awhile longer, for there is none whatever strength left in you."

"Nothing ails me, I can sit on my horse, by the living God! make haste!"

"I know well that my master's body is of iron, let it be as he commands. I only ask, my master, that you will protect me from the priest, Tsietsiskovski . . . Here are some clothes, better ones cannot be procured from the Armenian merchants. Dress yourself while I get some food for you, for I ordered the priest's servant to prepare some."

Jendzian busied himself with the food, while Skshetuski dressed himself hastily in the clothes that the king had ordered for him. From time to time he seized the lad and pressed him to his breast, and the boy told him everything from beginning. How he had met Bohun in Voldava, who was then convalescing from wounds inflicted upon him by Volodiyovski; how he had learned from him the whereabouts of the princess and how he had acquired the safe conduct; how he had gone with Volodiyovski and Zagloba to the ravines at Valadynka and how, after killing Cheremis and the witch, they had rescued the princess; and finally what danger they were in while fleeing before the soldiers of Burlay.

"That Burlay was killed by Pan Zagloba," interrupted Skshetuski, feverishly.

"He is a brave man," answered Jendzian; "I have never seen the like of him. for one is brave, another eloquent, a third frolicsome, but Pan Zagloba unites all these qualities in one person. But the worst experience we had, dear sir, was in the woods about Ploskirov when the horde pursued us. Pan Michael and Pan Zagloba remained behind in order to draw the attack upon themselves and thus delay the pursuers. I, however, rode towards Konstantinov, avoiding Zbaraj; for I thought that after they had killed the little gentleman and Pan Zagloba, they would surely pursue us in the direction of Zbaraj. I can't understand how God saved the two gentlemen. . . . I thought that they must have been killed. I and the princess slipped through between Khmyelnitski's forces who were approaching from Konstantinov, and Zbaraj, under whom the Tartars were marching."

"They did not go there immediately, for Pan Kushel beat them back. But speak faster."

"If I had only known that; but as I did not know it I pushed on with the princess between the Tartars and Cossacks, as through a defile. Fortunately the region was desolate, and nowhere did we find a living being, neither in villages nor towns, for all had fled. But I was half dead from fear that the Tartars would catch me, nor did I escape this fate either."

Skshetuski stopped dressing himself and asked: "How was that?"

"It was this way, my master. I met a division of Cossacks under Donyets, the brother of that Horpyna with whom the princess was lodged in the retreat. Fortunately I knew him well, for he had seen me with Bohun. I brought him messages from his sister, showed him the baton from Bohun, and told him all, how Bohun had sent me for the princess, and that he was waiting for me beyond Vlodava and he believed me, for he was Bohun's friend and knew that his sister was guarding the princess; I thought that he would let me pass but he said: 'Over there the general militia is gathering; you will surely fall into the hands of the Poles; stay with me; we will go to Khmyelnitski, the lady will be safest in his camp, for Khmyelnitski himself will watch over her for Bohun.' When he spoke thus I was dumbfounded for what could I answer? but I told him that Bohun was waiting for me and that my head was at stake if I did not bring the princess at once. Then he said: 'we will inform Bohun, but over there are the Poles.' I argued with him until he finally said 'I wonder why you are so afraid to go to the Cossacks—are you a traitor?' Then I saw that nothing remained but to flee during the night, for he had already begun to suspect me. I had everything in readiness for the road when Pan Pelka with some royal troops, fell upon Donyets that night."

"Pan Pelka?" cried Skshetuski, holding his breath.

"Yes, my master, he was a great soldier, too bad that he is fallen—the Lord have mercy on his soul! I do not know if anyone could lead an attacking party better than he—perhaps only Pan Volodiyovski. But Pan Pelka came and made such a sweep that not a man got away and even Donyets himself was captured. A few weeks ago he was drawn by oxen to the stake—and it served him right. But even with Pan Pelka, I had plenty of trouble, for he was a man who had no respect for virtue. . . . . God rest his soul! I feared that the princess, who had just been rescued from

the Cossacks, would meet a worse fate among our own men. . . . But when I told him that she was a relative of the Prince, it checked his designs. I must tell you, my master, that whenever I mentioned the name of our prince, he took off his cap and spoke of entering his service, therefore he respected the princess and led us to the king in Zamost. There, the priest Tsietsishovski (a very holy man) took us under his protection and placed the princess under the guardianship of Pani Vitovska."

Skshetuski took a deep breath and embraced Jendzian heartily. "You shall be my friend, my brother, and not my servant. But now let us get away. When ought Pani Vitovski to arrive here?"

"She should have come a week after me. . . . it is now ten days. . . . for eight days my master lay without consciousness."

"Let us depart, let us depart," repeated Skshetuski, "for my heart is bursting with joy."

But ere he had finished speaking the clatter of horses was heard in the yard and the window was suddenly darkened by the forms of horses and men. Through the glass Skshetuski saw first the old priest Tsietsishovski, then beside him the emaciated faces of Zagloba, Volodiyovski, Kushel, and other acquaintances among the red dragoons of the prince. A shout of joy resounded, and the next moment a number of knights headed by the priest, crowded into the room.

"Peace has been concluded at Zborov, and the siege has been raised," exclaimed the priest.

Skshetuski had guessed this on seeing his comrades from Zbaraj; soon he was in the arms of Zagloba, and Volodiyovski, who embraced him in turn.

"We were informed that you were alive," exclaimed Zagloba, "but our joy is all the greater that we find you looking so well. We have come here on purpose to see you. . . . Yan! You have no idea what glory you have achieved and what reward awaits you."

"The king has rewarded you," said the priest, "but the King of Kings has still more in store for you."

"I know it already," replied Skshetuski. "God reward you for it! Jendzian has told me all."

"And the joy did not suffocate you? that's good. Long live Skshetuski! long live the princess!" cried Zagloba. "We did not say a word to you, Yani, because we did not know

whether she lived. But the lad has rescued her bravely; what a clever fox! The prince awaits you both. Oh, we went for her beyond Yahorlik. I killed that infernal monster that guarded her. Those twelve boys ran away but you will overtake them. I shall have grandchildren, gentlemen. Jendzian, speak, what difficulties did you overcome? Just imagine, we two, including Pan Michael, held back the entire horde. I was the first to throw myself against the whole force. They hid in caves, but it was of no avail. Pan Michael too, stood by bravely. . . . Where is my little daughter? Give me my little daughter."

"God give you happiness, Yani, God give you happiness," said the little knight, embracing Skshetuski once more.

"God reward you for all you have done for me! I cannot thank you with words. My life and blood could not repay you," answered Skshetuski.

"That's not worth speaking of," exclaimed Zagloba. Peace is established! A miserable peace, but what could be done? we ought to rejoice that we are out of that pestilent Zbaraj. But we are delivered now, gentlemen. That was our work, and mine, for if Burlay were living yet all negotiations would be in vain. We shall go to the wedding. Then, Yani, keep your eyes open. You cannot guess what a wedding-present the prince has prepared for you? I'll tell you about it at another time. But where is my little daughter? The devil! Give me my little daughter. Bohun cannot take her away from us again; he would first have to break the fetters that bind him. Where is my dearest little daughter?"

"I was just about to mount to go to meet Pani Sandomierska," said Skshetuski. "Let us go, let us go! or I shall lose my senses."

"Hayda, gentlemen, let us ride with him, let us lose no time, Hayda!"

"Pani Sandomierska cannot be far away," said the priest.

"To horse!" cried Pan Michael.

But already Skshetuski was outside the door and threw himself upon his horse in a manner that gave no evidence of his recent illness.

Jendzian kept close to his side; he preferred not to be left alone with the priest. Pan Michael and Zagloba joined them and thus they galloped at the head of a party of nobles and red dragoons, who flew along the Toporov road like poppy leaves driven by the wind.

"Hayda!" shouted Zagloba, digging his heels into his horse.

Thus they rushed along for about ten furlongs when they beheld at a turn of the road a line of wagons and carriages escorted by a few dozens of attendants. Some of these rode ahead when they saw a body of armed men, in order to inquire who they were.

"Soldiers of the royal army," shouted Zagloba, "and whom do you escort?"

"The lady of the Pani Castellanova Sandomierska," was shouted in reply.

Skshetuski was so overcome by agitation that, not knowing what he was doing, he slid from his horse and stood tottering by the roadside. He took off his cap, perspiration ran over his temples, and the knight who had bravely faced all danger, now trembled in every limb, in sight of his happiness. Pan Michael also sprang from his saddle and supported the feeble knight in his arms.

Following their example all stood with bared heads by the roadside, while the line of wagons and carriages began to pass by them. Pani Vitovska was accompanied by a number of ladies who looked with wonder at the row of knights and soldiers, and asked each other what it all meant.

At length in the midst of the train a carriage appeared, more richly decorated than the others. Through its open window the knights beheld the dignified counteance of an elderly lady and beside her the sweet, beautiful face of the princess Kurtsevich.

"My little daughter," cried out Zagloba, throwing himself blindly against the carriage, "my little daughter, Skshetuski is here! . . . Little daughter!"

Shouts of "Halt! halt!" were heard, confusion arose, then Kushel and Volodiyovski led or rather dragged Skshetuski to the carriage. He had grown weaker and weaker, and hung with ever-increasing weight in their arms. His head sank upon his breast, he could go no further and collapsed by the step of the carriage.

A moment later the strong and beautiful arms of princess Kurtsevich raised up the weak, emaciated head of the knight.

Zagloba, observing the amazement of Pani Sandomierska cried out:

"This is Skshetuski, the hero of Zbaraj. He stole through the enemy, he saved the army, the prince, the entire Commonwealth. God bless them both! long may they live!"

"Long may they live!" shouted the nobles.

"Long may they live!" roared the dragoons, in tones of thunder that echoed over the fields of Toporov. . . .

"To Tarnopol! to the prince! to the wedding!" cried Zagloba. "Now my little daughter, your sorrows are over! . . . for Bohun there remains the executioner and the sword."

The priest had raised his eyes towards the heavens and his lips repeated the inspired utterance "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. . . "

Skshetuski was placed in the carriage beside the princess and the retinue moved on. The day was beautiful, the oak groves and field swere bathed in sunshine. Low down on the stubble fields, on the fallow lands and higher above them, and still higher in the blue air, there waved here and there the silvery threads of spider's webs, which late in the fall cover the fields in that country as if with snow. And peace reigned all about, only the snorting of the horses in the train disturbed the general quiet.

"Pan Michael!" said Zagloba, pushing his stirrup against that of Volodiyovski, "somethng has seized me by the throat again, and holds me fast, as when Pan Podbipyenta—God grant him eternal rest!—departed from Zbaraj. But when I think that these two have found each other at last, I feel as light-hearted as if I had drunk a quart of Petertsiment wine at a draught. If married life does not become your lot, you shall in your old age educate their children. Everyone is born for some special object, Pan Michael; we two are better fitted for war than for married life."

The little knight did not answer but twirled his moustaches vigorously.

They were bound to Toporov and thence to Tarnopol where they were to join Prince Yeremy, and proceed with him to Lemberg for the wedding. On the way Zagloba told the Pani Sandomierska all that had happened recently. She learned that the king after a bloody but indecisive battle, near Zborov had made a treaty with the Khan, not a very favorable one, but which secured peace for a time to the Common wealth. Khmyelnitski, by virtue of the treaty, remained Hetman of the Zaporojians and had the right to select and organize a standing army of forty thousand men, from the mass of common people, after swearing an oath of fealty to the king and State.

"It is beyond doubt," said Zagloba, "that war with Khmyelnitski will break out anew, but if our prince only receives the supreme command, then all will be right. . . . "

"Why do you not tell Skshetuski the most important news?" said the little knight, bringing his horse nearer.

"That's true," said Zagloba. "I wished to tell him at the outset, but could hardly catch my breath until now. You of course know nothing, Yani, of what happened after your departure. The prince has captured Bohun."

Skshetuski and Panna Kurtsevich were so much astonished at these words that they could not speak, they only raised their hands; then after a few moments Skshetuski asked:

"How, by what means?"

"The finger of God is evidenced," replied Zagloba, "nothing else but the finger of God. The treaty already had been concluded and we were just marching out from that pestilent Zbaraj, when the prince hastened with the cavalry to the left wing lest some horde should make an attack. . . . for the Tartars often disregard treaties. . . . Suddenly a band of three hundred horsemen attacked the entire cavalry of the prince."

"Bohun alone would dare that," exclaimed Skshetuski.

"It was he. But Cossacks cannot cope with the soldiers of Zbaraj. Pan Michael soon completely surrounded them and cut them down to the last man; Bohun was captured after being again wounded. He has no luck with Pan Michael; he himself must be convinced of that now, for this was the third encounter. Probably he was seeking death."

"It appeared," interrupted Pan Michael, "that Bohun had hastened from Valadynka to Zbaraj. It was a long journey, however, and when he learned that a treaty had already been concluded, he lost his senses from rage and disregarded everything."

"He who draws the sword will perish by the sword, for such is the nature of things," said Zagloba, "he is a mad Cossack, but boldest when most in danger. A quarrel arose between us and that gang of robbers on his account. We thought that war would break out anew, for the prince cried out that the treaty had been broken. Khymelnitski wanted to save Bohun, but the Khan was very much enraged at him, for he, according to the Khan's own words, 'has brought my word and my oath into contempt.' The Khan threatened

to make war upon Khmyelnitski and sent a messenger to our prince saying that Bohun was a common robber and requesting that he be treated accordingly. It is said that it was also the Khan's aim that the Tartars should lead away in quiet their captives, of which they had taken so many that they would be sold in Stambul for two hobnails a man."

"What did the prince do with Bohun?" asked Skshetuski, impatiently.

"The prince had alreay ordered a stake to be pointed for him when he changed his mind and said 'I will present him to Skshetuski, he may do as he pleases with him.' Now the Cossack is in a dungeon at Tarnopol, the barber-surgeon is bandaging his head. My God! how often his soul tried to run away from him! No dogs ever worried the skin of a wolf as we have his. Pan Michael alone bit him three times. But he's a hard nut to crack, and to tell the truth an unfortunate man. May the hangman help him! I bear him no ill-will, though he was furiously incensed against me and for no cause. Why, I drank with him and took his part as if he were my equal, till he raised his hand against you, my little daughter. I could easily have done for him at Rozloga. But there are very few who pay good for good, and there is little gratitude in this world. May the—"

Here Zagloba began to nod his head. "And what will you do with him, Pan Yan?" he asked, "the soldiers say that you will certainly make an outrider of him, for he has a fine appearance; but I cannot believe that you will deal with him in such a fashion."

"Certainly I shall not," answered Skshetuski, "he is a soldier and a valiant knight, and because he is unfortunate is no reason for disgracing him with menial service."

"May God forgive him everything," said the princess.

"Amen!" said Zagloba. "He prays for death to rescue him, and he could have found it had he not come late to Zbaraj."

All grew silent and occupied themselves with their own thoughts until in the distance appeared Grabova, where they made their first halt for refreshments. There they found a number of soldiers returning from Zborov. Pan Vitovski, the Castellan Sandomierski, had also come there with his regiment to meet his wife, and with him was the Chief of Krasnostavsk Pan Pshiyemski, a number of nobles of the general militia, who were on their way home. The court

at Grabova had been burned down as well as all the other buildings, but the day was warm and bright; so that no shelter was necessary, so they disposed themselves in an oak-grove under the open sky. Ample stores of food and drink had been brought along and the servants immediately set about preparing supper. Pan Sandomierski ordered tents to be pitched for the ladies and dignitaries, and soon a regular camp was arranged. The knights crowded before the tents to get a look at Skshetuski and the princess. Others discussed the late war; those who were not at Zbaraj, but at Zborov, asked the prince's men for the particulars of the siege. Everyone was joyous and gay, especially as the day was so beautiful.

Zagloba of course, did most of the talking among the nobles, telling for the thousandth time how he had killed Burlay; and Jendzian among the servants who were preparing the meal. But the clever lad found a fit opportunity to draw Skshetuski aside and humbly embracing his knees, he said:

"My Lord! I should like to ask a favor of you."

"I could hardly refuse you anything," answered Skshetuski, "since through you I have regained what is dearest to me."

"I thought at once," said the lad, "that your lordship would grant me the favor."

"Speak, what is your wish?"

Jendzian's chubby face grew dark, and hatred and revenge were reflected in his eyes.

"I ask but one favor, nothing more," said he, "and that is that your Lordship give Bohun to me."

"Bohun?" asked Skshetuski, in great astonishment. "What do you want to do with him?"

"It is ever in my mind, my Lord, that I get my revenge, and that I pay him back, with compound interest, for the disgrace he inflicted upon me in Chigrin. I knew also that your Lordship will put him to death, and therefore I wish to settle with him first."

Skshetuski frowned.

"It cannot be," he said with decision.

"Oh, my God! would that I had died," said Jendzian, in piteous tones. "Have I lived only to be disgraced?"

"Ask anything else," said Skshetuski, "and I will not refuse it, but I cannot grant this request. Go home and ask your

parents if it is not more sinful to fulfill such a vow than to give it up. Do not thrust your own revengeful hand before God's lest it fall also upon you. You should be ashamed of yourself, Jendzian! That man is praying for death and is wounded and in bondage. Do you wish to be his executioner, to torment him? do you wish to put shame upon a prisoner, or to butcher a wounded man? Why, are you a Tartar or a Cossack butcher! as I live I cannot allow this! Don't mention it to me again!"

So much power and firmness of will was evidenced in Pan Yan's voice that the lad lost all hope of gaining his request; he only said, in a sorrowful voice:

"Were he well, he could vanquish two of my size with ease, and now that he is ill, I am not permitted to have my revenge—when can I pay him back?"

"Leave vengeance to God," said Skshetuski.

The lad opened his mouth; he evidently wanted to say something more, to ask something, but Pan Yan had already turned towards the tents, before which a numerous company had assembled. Pani Vitovska sat in the centre with the princess at her side, and around them the knights. In front of them stood Zagloba, bareheaded, and engaged in telling those who had been only at Zborov all about the siege of Zbaraj. All listened to him with breathless attention; emotion was portrayed on their faces and those who had not been at Zbaraj regretted their absence. Pan Yan took a seat beside the princess and grasping her hand, pressed it to his lips; then they leaned against each other arm in arm and sat quietly. The sun was setting and gradually evening was coming on. Skshetuski listened as attentively as if something new to him was being related. Zagloba mopped his forehead and his voice grew louder. Memory or imagination pictured those terrible scenes to the knights. They beheld the ramparts surrounded by a turbulent sea of men, and the mad assaults; they heard the tumult, the howls, the thunder of cannon, the rattle of musketry; they beheld the prince in his silver armor, standing upon the ramparts amidst a shower of bullets. . . . then the suffering, the famine, those blood-red nights during which death circled like a huge spectral bird above the camp. . . . the departure of Pan Longin Podbipyenta and of Skshetuski . . . . All listened with rapt attention, at times raising their eyes to heaven, or grasping their swords, and Zagloba ended as follows:

"It is now but one grave, one great tomb, and that under it do not lie buried the honor of the Commonwealth, the flower of its knighthood, the prince, and I, and all of us, whom even the Cossacks called Zbaraj lions, is due to this man here!"

Then he pointed at Skshetuski.

"As I live, that is true!" exclaimed in one voice Marek, Sobieski and Pan Pshiyemski.

"Glory to him! honor and thanks!" shouted the assembled knights in thundering tones. "Vivat Sksehtuski! Vivat the young couple! long live the hero!" Each time they shouted more loudly.

A wave of enthusiasm spread through the assemblage. Some ran for goblets, others threw their caps in the air. The soldiers began to rattle their sabres and there arose a general shout.

"Glory! glory! long may he live! long may he live!"

Skshetuski, like a true Christian knight, bowed his head in humility; but the princess rose, shook her tresses, her cheeks aflame, and her eyes gleaming with pride, for this knight was to become her husband, and the glory of the husband falls upon the wife like the sun's light upon the earth. Late that night the assembly broke up and started away in two directions. The Vitovskis, Pan Pshiyemski and the Chief of Krasnostavsk marched with their regiments towards Toporov, while Skshetuski, with the princess and Pan Michael's squadron, went on to Tarnopol. The night was as bright as day. Myriads of stars gleamed in the heavens; the moon rose and silvered the cob-web covered fields. The soldiers began to sing; later, light mists arose from the meadows and made the whole region look like a great lake gleaming in the moonlight.

On such a night Skshetuski had gone forth from Zbaraj, and now on such another night he felt the heart of the princess beating against his own.

EPILOGUE.

This historic tragedy, however, did not end either at Zbaraj or at Zborov. Even the first act was not concluded. Two years later the Cossacks rose again in rebellion against the Commonwealth. Khymelnitski took the field mightier than ever before, and with him marched the Khan with all his hordes, and the same leaders who before surrounded Zbaraj—the wild Tukhay Bey, Urum Murza, and Artim, Girey, Nur-ed-Din, and Galgi, and Amurad, and Subagazi. Mighty pillars of flame and lamentations of people marked their path. Thousands of warriors covered the fields, filled the forests; from half a million throats there issued war-cries, and it seemed to the people that the last hour of the Commonwealth had come.

But the Commonwealth too, had shaken off its lethargy. The chancellor's former policy of establishing peace by means of treaties had been abandoned. It was now clear that the sword alone could insure peace of long duration. So, when the king advanced against the inundating enemy, an army of one hundred thousand soldiers and nobles marched with him, besides swarms of irregulars and camp-servants.

Not one of the characters of our story was missing. There was Prince Visnyovyetski with his entire division, in which, as formerly, served Skshetuski and Volodiyovski; there were the two hetmans Pototski and Kalinovski, who then had been ransomed from the Tartars. There was also Colonel Stefan Charmyetski, subsequently the scourge of King Charles Gustavus of Sweden, and Pshiyemski commander of the whole artillery; and general Ubald, Pan Artsishevski, and the Chief of Krasnostavsk; and his brother, the Chief of Yavrov, afterwards King Yan III, and Ludvig Veyher, the voyevoda of Pomerania, and Jacob voyevoda of Marburg, and the standard bearer Konetspolski; and Prince Dominik Zaslavski, the bishops and dignitaries of the Crown—senators—the whole Commonwealth with the chief leader, the King.

On the fields of Berestechka at last myriads of the hostile armies met, and one of the greatest battles in the history of

the world was fought. Throughout Europe its echoes resounded.

It lasted for three days. During the first two days fortune hung in the balance, on the third a general engagement decided the battle. Prince Yeremy began that engagement. At the head of the entire left wing, bareheaded and without arms, he swept like a cyclone against enormous masses formed of mounted Zaporojians, from all the Crimea, Tartars, Nogoais, Byalogorods and Silistrian and Rumelian Turks, Urumbalis, janissaries, Serbs, Wallachians, Peryerovs, and other wild warriors gathered from the Ural the Caspian Sea and the marshes of Moeotis as far as the Danube.

As a river loses itself in the foaming waves of the sea, so the squadrons of the prince were lost in that ocean of enemies. A cloud of dust rolled over the plain like a whirlwind and enveloped the combatants.

The rest of the army and the king looked on upon this superhuman struggle, and the vice chancellor Leshchynski raised aloft the wood of the Holy Cross and blessed with it the vanished squadrons.

Meanwhile on the other side the entire Cossack camp, consisting of about two hundred thousand men, moved slowly against the royal army, issuing from the woods like a dragon, and vomiting fire from their cannon.

But ere the bulk of the enemy had issued from the clouds of dust in which Yeremy's squadrons had disappeared, horsemen began one by one to drop away from their ranks, then hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands, and these all rushed to the hill held by the Khan and his chosen guards. The wild masses fled in mad terror and disorder—the Polish squadrons chasing them. Thousands of Cassacks and Tartars covered the battle-field; among them, pierced through by a double-handled sword, lay the mortal enemy of the Poles and the faithful ally of the Cossacks, the wild, brave Tukhay Bey.

The terrible prince had triumphed.

The king looked upon the prince's victory with the eye of a leader and determined to crush the hordes before the Cossacks could arrive. The entire army was set in motion, all the cannon roared, spreading death and destruction. Soon the brother of the Khan, the splendid Amurad fell with a bulllet in his breast. The hordes broke out in a howl of terror. The Khan, who had been wounded at the very out-

set of the battle, looked with dismay upon the field. From the distance amid the thunder of cannon came Pshiyemski and the king himself; the earth groaned beneath the weight of the onrushing cavalry.

Islam-Girey stricken with terror did not await the attack, but fled, and after him all the hordes, the Volosha, the Urumbalo, the Zaporojian Cossack cavalry, the Silistrian Turks, and the Turkish converts fled like a cloud before the tempest.

Khymelnitski in desperation overtook the fugitives, and begged and implored the Khan to return to the battle, but the Khan, bellowing with rage at the sight of him ordered the Tartars to seize him and bind him to a horse, and thus he was borne along.

The Cossack camp alone was left, the commander of that, Colonel of Kropivenski, Dziedzial, did not know what had happened to Khmyelnitski; seeing however the defeat and shameful flight of all the hordes, he stopped the advance, and then retreating, he took up a position upon the swampy banks of the Pleshov.

A terrible storm arose, immense torrents of water poured down from the heavens; "God was washing the land after a just battle."

A drizzling rain lasted for several days and the royal army rested after the battle of the previous day. The Cossacks seized the occasion to surround their camp with ramparts and thus transform it into a gigantic, moveable fortress.

When fair weather returned a siege began: the strangest ever seen.

One hundred thousand royal troops besieged the army of Dziedzial which numbered two hundred thousand men.

The king was short of cannon, provisions and ammunition. Dziedzial had an inexhaustible supply of powder and provisions, besides seventy cannon of heavier and lighter calibre.

But at the head of the royal army was the king. The Cossacks had not Khmyelnitski.

The royal army was flushed with recent victory; the Cossacks were in despair.

Several days passed. All hope of the return of Khmyelnitski and the Khan vanished.

Then negotiations were entered into. The Cossack leaders came and bowed their heads humbly before the king, pleaded for mercy, haunted the tents of the Senators, clung to their garments, and promised to find Khmyelnitski, wherever he was even under the ground and deliver him to the king.

The heart of Yan Kazimier was not obdurate. He was willing to let the "blacks" and soldiers return to their homes, provided they would surrender all the chiefs, for these he intended to detain until Khmyelnitski should be given up. But such a compact was not agreeable to the officers, who did not look for forgiveness in view of their many offences. Hence the struggle continued even while the negotiations were going on; desperate attacks were made, and Polish and Cossack blood flowed in torrents.

The Cossacks fought during the day, bravely and with the courage of despair, but at night swarms of them stood before the royal camp and howled for mercy.

Dziedzial was inclined to give in to the royal demands, and was willing to sacrifice his own head if he could save the people and soldiers. But dissensions arose in the Cossack camp. Some wished to surrender, others wished to defend themselves to the death; but all of them were planning how to escape from the camp. But this seemed an impossibility even to the boldest. The camp was enclosed by the forks of the river and by great swamps. They might defend themselves for years, but to leave the camp there was only one road, the road through the royal army. But no one thought of that road.

The negotiations dragged on interrupted by battles. The dissensions among the Cossacks grew apace. As the outcome of one these Dziedzial was deposed from his office and a new leader was chosen.

His name gave new courage to the despairing Cossacks; the echo of it in the royal camp stirred in the hearts of several knights half-forgotten memories of past sufferings and misfortunes.

Bohun was the new leader's name. He had previously won high distinction among the Cossacks both in the council and in battle. The public sentiment had always indicated him as the successor of Khmyelnitski. Bohun was the first of the Cossack commanders to appear with the Tartars on the field of Berestechka at the head of fifty thousand men. He took part in the three-days cavalry combat, and though defeated with the Khan and his hordes, by Yeremy, he had managed to keep the greater part of his army together and to bring it safely into camp. Now the party opposed to the negotiations made him commander-in-chief in place of Dziedzial hoping that he might be able to save the camp and the army.

Indeed the young commander would not hear of negotiations, he only wanted battle and bloodshed, even though he should drown in the blood. But soon he was convinced that with the troops under him it would be impossible to cut a way through the army of the king. He therefore hit upon another plan. History has preserved the memory of his unparalled efforts, considered by contemporaries worthy of a hero, and which might have saved the army and the "blacks."

Bohun determined to bridge the swamps of Plesov and thus enable the besieged to retreat over them.

Entire forests fell beneath the axes of the Cossacks and sank into the swamp. Wagons, tents, skins, coats, were thrown into the swamp, the bridge grew longer day by day. Nothing seemed impossible to this commander.

The king delayed the assault in order to avoid bloodshed. But when he saw this gigantic work he recognized that delay was dangerous and issued an order that the army be in readiness at evening for the final assault.

No one in the Cossack camp knew of this intention. The bridge had been pushed onward during the night, and in the morning, Bohun, with the chiefs, rode out to examine the work.

It was Monday, July 7th, 1651. The morning was misty, dawn in the east was blood red, the sun rose looking sickly and bronze-colored; a peculiar bloody glow was in the woods and over the water.

From the Polish camp they were driving the horses to pasture; the Cossack camp was astir and resounded with the voices of men. Fires were burning, the morning meal was being prepared. All saw the departure of Bohun with his suite and the cavalry following them, with whom the commander intended to fall upon the Voyevoda of Bratslav, who harassed the rear of the camp and was injuring the Cossack works with cannon.

The "blacks" viewed this marching forth with calmness and even with confidence. The eyes of thousands followed the young warrior and the lips of thousands sent after him their benediction:

"God bless you, Falcon!'

The commander, the suite, and the cavalry had reached the edge of the forest; for a moment they gleamed in the morning sun and then began to disappear in the forest.

All at once a terrified voice shouted at the entrance to the camp:

"Men save yourselves!"

"The chiefs are fleeing!" shouted others. "The chiefs are fleeing!" repeated hundreds and thousands of voices.

A murmur ran through the crowds as a wind rushes through the woods, and suddenly a terrible, unearthly cry burst from two hundred thousand throats.

"Fly! fly! the Poles! The chiefs have fled!"

Masses of men rushed along like a roaring torrent. Fires were trodden out, wagons upset, tents torn to pieces. All were crowding, pushing, squeezing, and trampling. A terrible panic bereft all of their senses. Heaps of corpses soon obstructed the way; these had been trampled to death amid roars, and shouts, and groans. Crowds rushed towards the bridge and swamp and pushed one another from the bridge. The drowning ones, locked in deadly embraces and howling to heaven for mercy, sank in the cold, slimy mud. On the bridge a battle for place was fought. The waters of the Pleshov were filled with corpses. The Nemesis of history now took terrible payment for Pilavyets and Berestechka.

The fearful clamor reached the ears of the youthful commander, and he knew at once what it meant, but in vain did he return at once to the camp, in vain did he confront the crowds with hands raised to heaven. His voice was lost in the roar of thousands, the frightful torrent of the fleeing crowds carried him away with his horse, his suite, and the cavalry, to destruction.

The royal army was astonished at the commotion, which at first was mistaken for a desperate attack; one scarcely could believe the evidence of his own eyes.

But when the astonishment had passed a few moments later the squadrons did not even wait for an order to attack, but rushed towards the masses of the enemy. In front of all swept the dragoons like a whirlwind and at the head the little colonel swung his sabre above him.

It was a day of rage, of vengeance, and judmgent. . . Whoever was not crushed to death, or drowned, perished by the sword. The forks of the river were so filled with blood that one could not tell whether water or blood was flowing. The panic-stricken crowds pushed one another into the water and drowned. The ravages of death in the woods were all the more terrible, for some of the rabble commenced to defend themselves furiously. Battles raged in the swamp, on the field, in the forest. The Voyevoda of Bratslav cut off

the retreat of the fugitives. In vain did the king issue orders that the soldiers be restrained. Compassion was dead; the slaughter, the like of which the oldest veterans had not seen, and at the memory of which the hair stood on their heads in later times, lasted until night.

When at last darkness fell upon the earth, the victors themselves were shocked by their bloody work; they sang no Te Deum; and no tears of joy, but tears of regret and sorrow flowed from the eyes of the worthy king.

Thus ended the first act of the bloody drama, whose author was Khmyelnitski.

But Bohun did not lose his life with others on that dreadful day. Some say that seeing the defeat he saved himself by flignt, others say that a well-known knight protected him, but no one could get at the truth.

This much is certain that in the wars that followed, his name was often mentioned among those of the most famous Cossack leaders. A shot fired by some enemy, struck him a few years later, but even this did not put an end to his existence.

After the death of Prince Yeremy Vishnyovyetski, brought on by military hardships, Bohun came to rule over the greater part of Lubni, which fell away from the Commonwealth. It was said that afterwards he would not recognize the authority of Khmyelnitski. The latter, cursed by his own people, and broken sought foreign aid, but the proud Bohun refused all protection and was ready to defend his Cossack independence with his sword.

It was said that a smile never lighted the countenance of this extraordinary man. He did not live in Lubni but in a village which he rebuilt from its ashes, and was called Rosloga. There also he is supposed to have died.

Civil wars survived him and continued for a long time. Later came the plague, and the Swedes; the Tartars made constant incursions in the Ukraine, and bore numbers of the people into slavery. The Commonwealth was devastated, so also was the Ukraine. Wolves howled about the cinders of former cities, and the once blooming land became one vast cemetery. Hatred grew in the men's hearts and poisoned kindred blood.

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